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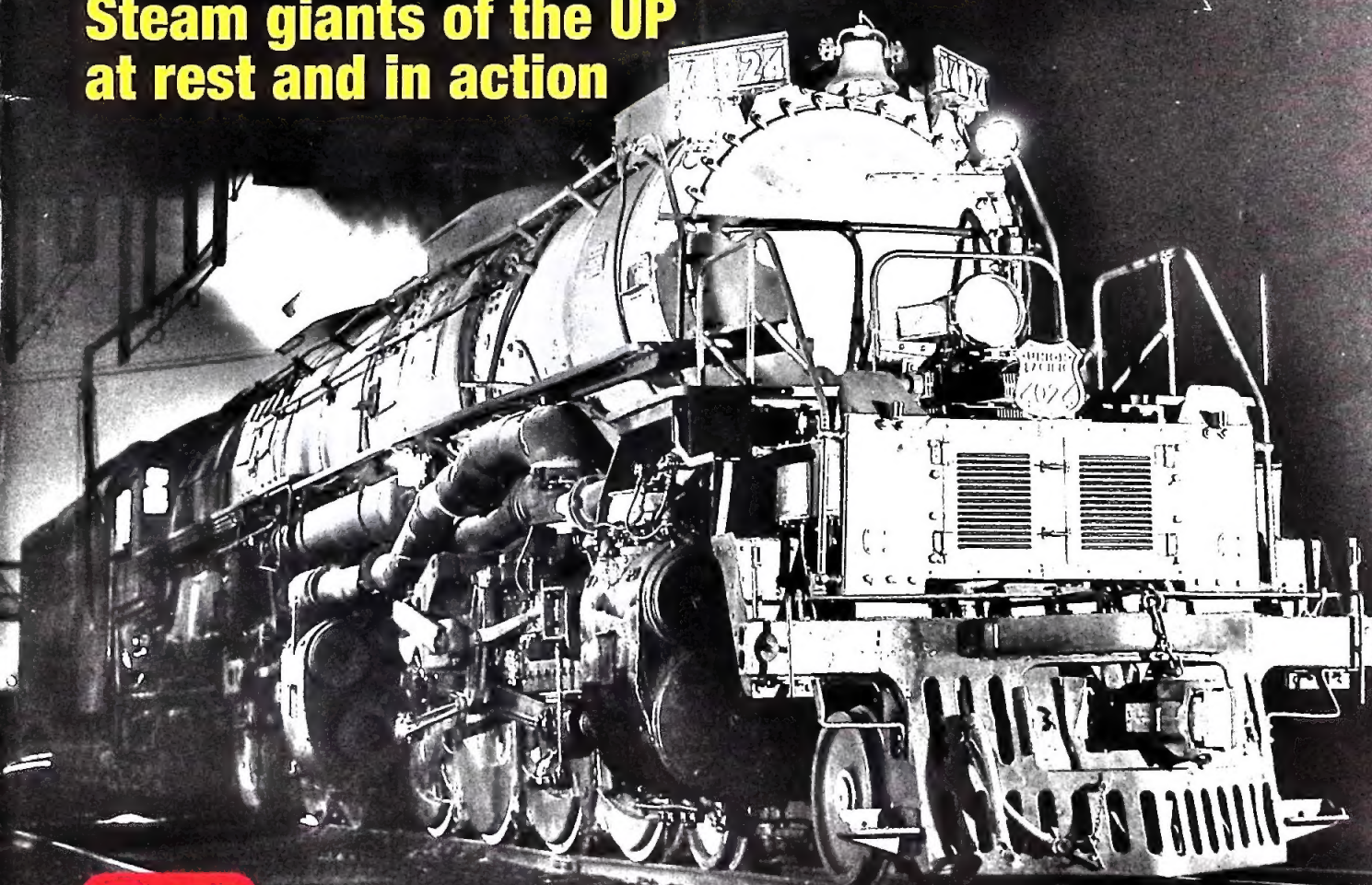
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Editor's Page

Steam in the background

Regular-service steam was long gone by the time I was old enough to begin exploring the railroad scene. Yes, I've seen and ridden steam-powered tourist lines, mainline excursions, and photo charters, some of which were painstakingly faithful recreations of steam-era transportation.

In such settings, the iron horse is the star, performing, after perhaps months or years of special preparation, for an attentive audience. Yet, satisfying as these runs are, they're a far cry from the days when steam locomotives were part of everyday life nearly everywhere.

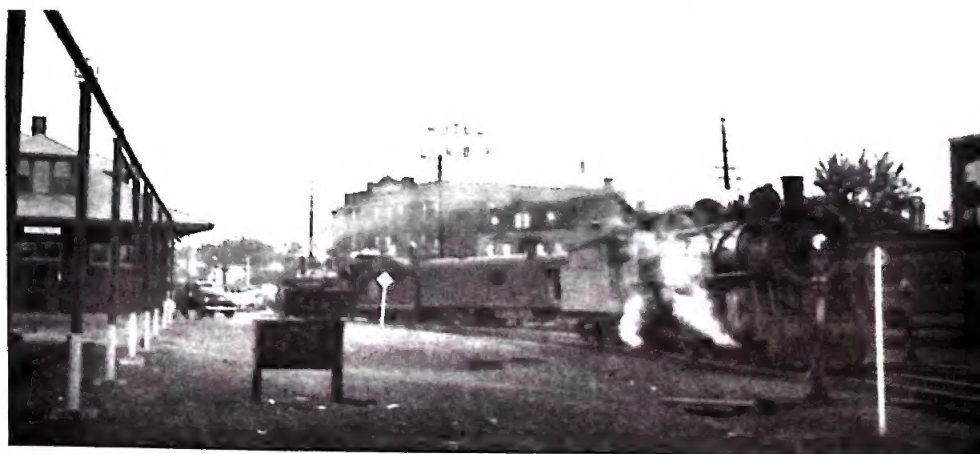
Dwight Smith found such a world in 1954 during his trip to the Eastern Provinces of Quebec [pages 36-43], where steam was still supreme on the Canadian National and Canadian Pacific. I'd give a lot to visit that time and place, to see and photograph the Ten-Wheeler on CP's Drummondville mixed, or the CN Pacifics and Mikados at Sherbrooke.

But the part of Smith's trip I'd most like to experience is the night at the Hotel Brunswick in Richmond, across from the CN station. From his room, Smith could hear the sounds of steam railroading in the night, background noise that spoke of an era of magnificent machines, now gone forever.

Robert S. McGonigal



Pacifics mingle at CN's Richmond (Que.) depot during Dwight Smith's 1954 trip. The Hotel Brunswick provided a grandstand seat for the night's steam action.



Dwight A. Smith

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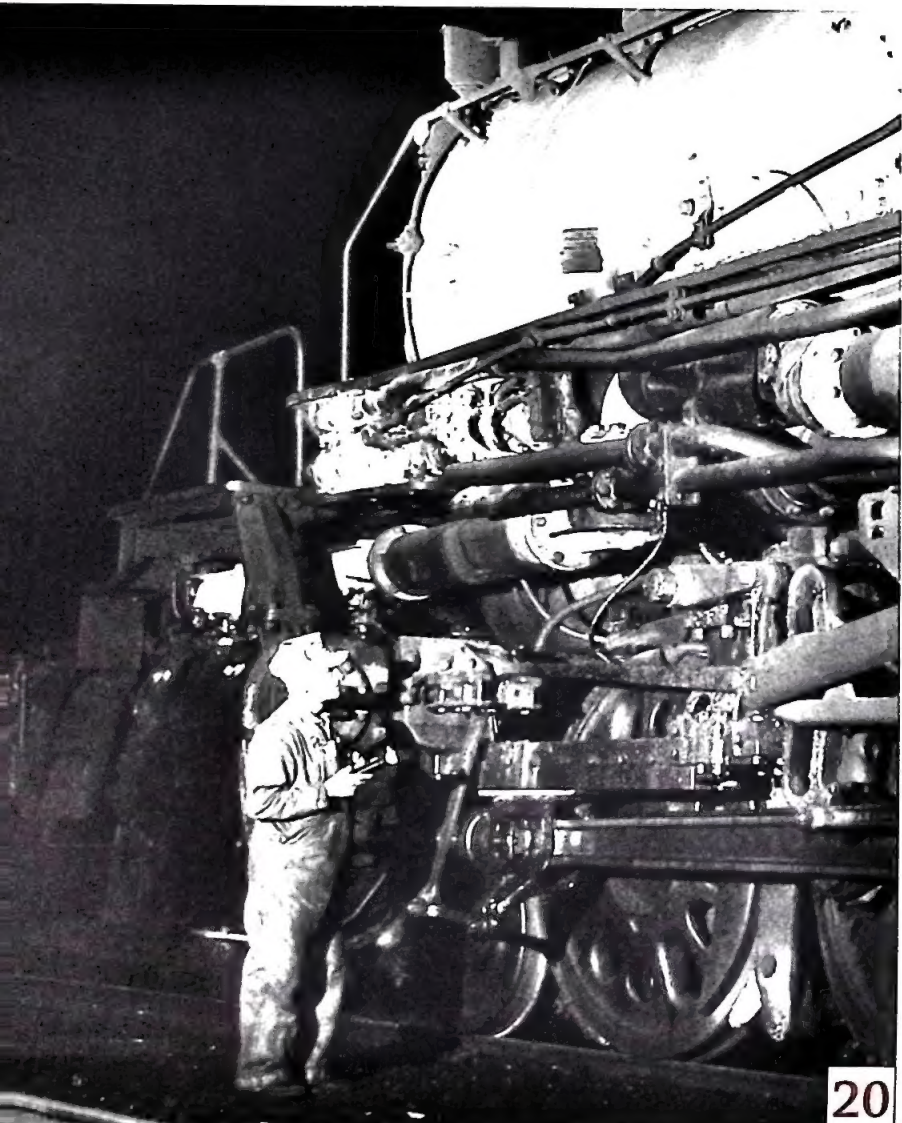
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Only the baggage car toward the rear tips off this is a mixed



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Tending UP's biggest on a magical Wyoming evening for a Northerner



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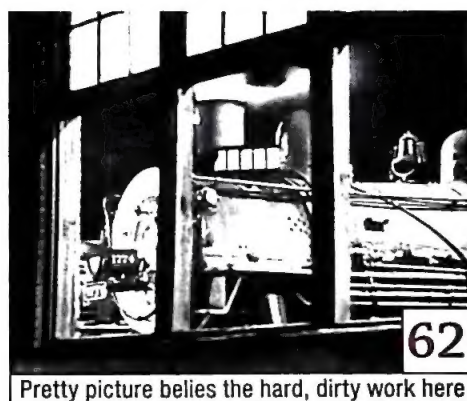
Jamaica, hub of the Long Island, has always been busy



On the cover: Union Pacific 4-8-8-4 4024, last-built of the road's 25 Big Boys, reposes at the terminal in Laramie, Wyo. (see page 20). *Jim Shaughnessy photo*



In 1954, steam galore east of Montreal



Pretty picture belies the hard, dirty work here



On Burlington's main line, 10 trains in 2 1/2 hours

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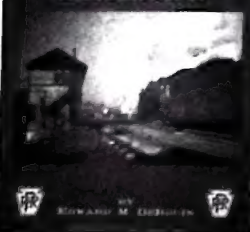
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THE PENNSY IN CHICAGO



Contributors



Ed DeRouin ["One Day at . . . Brookfield, Ill.," pages 50-55] is retired from a career with Chicago-area utility Commonwealth Edison. A resident of La Fox, Ill., who lists the Burlington, North Shore Line, and Chicago & North Western among his favorite roads, Ed writes and publishes books through his firm Pixels Publishing; his most recent title is *Moving Mail and Express by Rail*. This is his fourth CLASSIC TRAINS byline.

Paul J. Dolkos ["Of Chicks, Rollers, and the Caboose as a Target," pages 30-35], is an accomplished HO-scale modeler (of the Boston & Maine in the 1950's) who has also had a lifelong interest in railroading. He also enjoys photography and prototype-style model railroad operations, and his expertise is evident in his many articles published in our sister Kalmbach magazines *MODEL RAILROADER*, *GREAT MODEL RAILROADS*, and *MODEL RAILROAD PLANNING*. Paul, who is retired from work in high-tech sales, lives with his wife, Linda, in suburban Washington, D.C.; they have two grown children. This is his first appearance in CLASSIC TRAINS.



Larry Goolsby ["Standard Railroad of the South," pages 16-19] is secretary-treasurer for the Atlantic Coast Line and Seaboard Air Line Historical Society and associate editor of its journal, *Lines South*. The Kensington (Md.) resident also authored the book *Atlantic Coast Line Passenger Service: The Postwar Years* (TLC, 1999). This is his first CLASSIC TRAINS byline.

Elrond Lawrence ["Classics Today: SP Heaven in a California Canyon," pages 68-71] grew up in the San Fernando Valley and began taking pictures in the early 1980's. Although his photos and writing have been widely published in *TRAINS* and elsewhere, this is the first time he's

been in CLASSIC TRAINS. His book *Route 66 Railway* was recently published by the Los Angeles Railroad Heritage Foundation. Elrond lives in Salinas, Calif., with his wife and daughter.

Harold O. "Hal" Lewis Jr. ["Spring Break, 1950," pages 72-75], a native of Washington, D.C., graduated from Purdue's School of Aeronautics in 1953. He amassed a large negative collection of steam photos from D.C. and Seattle, where he took his first post-Purdue job, with Boeing. He later moved to California to work for Lockheed, retiring in 1989; he lives in San Jose. This is his fifth CLASSIC TRAINS byline.

Harold Meeker ["Trainmaster Trouble," pages 58-61] worked for 30 years on three railroads (his longest tenure being at the B&O) and for 10 more years as a consultant to almost 50 more. Hal's one previous story in CLASSIC TRAINS was "The Night the *Capitol Limited* Almost Froze Up," in Summer 2007.

R. David Read

["My SP Roundhouse Days," pages 62-67] served as a telegrapher/towerman for SP and then moved to the Santa Fe, where he was a telegrapher/wire chief. Sensing the need for telegraphers had a dismal future, he completed his college education with a B.S. in electrical engineering and worked in the sound and communications industry. He is now a contributing editor for the trade magazine *Sound & Communications*. He continues to maintain membership in the Morse Club of America and the Santa Fe Communication Employee Alumni. His recent article on the new Berlin rail station [September 2008 *TRAINS*] was his first byline in a Kalmbach publication. His roundhouse article is an excerpt from his forthcoming book describing his 1950's railroad experiences.



Jim Shaughnessy ["Big Boys by Night . . . and Day," pages 20-29] and his work are featured in each issue of CLASSIC TRAINS. *The Call of Trains*, a 224-page album of his photos, has just been published by W. W. Norton & Co.

Joe Shearer ["Dashing Dan's Stationmaster," pages 44-49] retired in 1978 and bought a small farm in Ocala, Fla., where he took up golf and raised animals. He and his wife did some

cruising and took camping trips with their grandchildren. He kept in touch with other LIRR retirees who had relocated to central Florida and served with them as a volunteer firefighter. This is Joe's first appearance in CLASSIC TRAINS. **James A. Valle** is a native of Oakland, Calif. He has received degrees from San Francisco State University, UCLA, and the University of Delaware. Jim has published two books and numerous articles on maritime history and railroading subjects, including "Sampling California Streamliners" in our Summer 2001 issue. Jim retired as a professor of history at Delaware State University in 2004. Married with two grown children, Jim lives in Dover, Del.

Dwight A. Smith ["Steam in the Eastern Townships," pages 36-43] spent more than 50 years in the railroad business, starting in 1942 with a stint slinging mail bags at Penn Station, New York, during the Christmas rush. After World War II combat service in the Navy and then finishing college, Dwight joined the Boston & Maine in 1947 for what turned out to be a 25-year career with B&M and its subsidiary Springfield Terminal. In 1972 he left the B&M to found the Conway Scenic Railroad in North Conway, N.H., where he remained until retiring in 1999. Dwight has been married for 60 years, and has five children, nine grandchildren, and two great grandchildren. His hobbies include travel, photography, antique autos, and model railroading. His HO Northern Vermont Railway was featured in the July 2002 MODEL RAILROADER, and he prizes an MR document from 1941, signed by A. C. Kalmbach, that officially registers the name "Northern Vermont Ry." Dwight has had articles and photos in TRAINS as well as various rail historical society publications, but this is his first story in CT. He's pictured in October 2007 when serving as a car host on a Conway Scenic excursion to Crawford Notch. 

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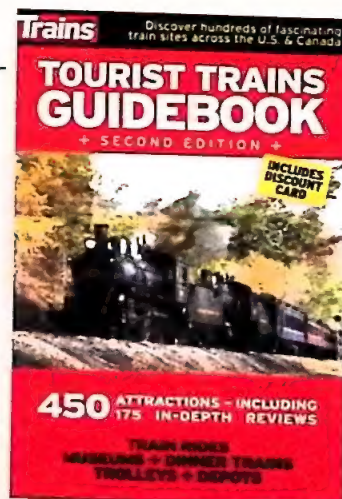


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True Color

When the EL was new

We're at Mill Rift, Pa., 91 miles from Jersey City, according to the sturdy concrete mile marker beside the former Erie Railroad main line. The sounds of water flowing in the Delaware River are joined, then overwhelmed, by the chant of EMD 567 diesel engines and the rumble of freight-car wheels as a mix of five F units and Geeps leads a freight west. The time is the early 1960's, just a few years after the October 1960 merger of the Erie and the Delaware, Lackawanna & Western. F3A 8411, built as DL&W passenger-service unit 801A, in the lead still wears its original livery (slightly modified with "EL" and ERIE-LACKAWANNA markings), while the F7B right behind it carries Erie black with yellow trim. The merged road soon adopted the handsome DL&W paint scheme, making it a bright spot in the increasingly somber northeastern railroad scene. The EL went bankrupt anyway, and became part of Conrail when it was formed on April 1, 1976.

John Buchanan photo; R. R. Wallin collection



Dan Pope collection

Four PA's may have been more power than the *San Francisco Chief* needed—as here with the eastbound in August '65—but there was a reason.

PA's: The story behind the story

I really enjoyed Pete Hansen's article on the original Alco PA's for Santa Fe ["The First PA's: The Ecstasy, the Agony, and the Legacy," pages 20–31, Winter 2008]. As always, Pete's in-depth research and writing skills are evident. His work intertwines a wide variety of background material ranging from marketing strategy and publicity to technical and operational information. As much as I have read about PA's, he provides a completely new insight to "the story behind the story."

*Richard Hamilton
Overland Park, Kans.*

Hansen's story was a delight, but on page 26 he refers to "Luce's *Look* magazine." *Look* was the brainchild of Gardner "Mike" Cowles, Jr., while cousin Henry Luce was responsible for *Life*.

James Luce, Warwick, N.Y.

As a Santa Fe retiree for now 27 years, I found Pete Hansen's Alco PA piece well done. The photos further enhanced it, showing off these colorful

beasts' elegant, handsome lines.

During my two years (1963–65) in Winslow, Ariz., I noticed the *San Francisco Chief* always had four of the Alcos, totaling 8,000 h.p., surely more than enough to get the train over the road. My neighbor, roundhouse foreman Roy Stock, told me the PA's were great runners when in good order, but using four units was insurance to keep the train on schedule in case one of the units dropped out.

*Jack Whitmeyer
Redondo Beach, Calif.*

All the articles in your Winter 2008 issue were great, but I especially enjoyed the two on the Alco PA's, which, along with its "little brother," the Alco FA, are my favorite diesels.

Robert L. Riser, Oxford, Ga.

The editor slipped up in captioning the photo at the top left on page 30, of a PA at Las Cruces, N.Mex., around dawn. That's no "nameless train"—it's Santa Fe's *El Pasoan*.

Richard Estock, Woodbridge, N.J.

Remembering the Valley

Thanks for Steven Duff's story on the Lehigh Valley PA's ["Mr. Fogg, No. 603, and the Inextinguishable Lehigh Valley," pages 32–35]. I was brought up in Wallingford, Pa., west of Philadelphia on the Pennsylvania Railroad, and my father's family all lived in the Elmira, N.Y., area. During the 1930's, I often spent a month with my grandparents in Elmira. I would ride the through coach from Philadelphia's Reading Terminal onto the Valley at Bethlehem, and on to Sayre, Pa., where relatives would meet the train and drive me to Elmira.

During World War II, I was assigned for basic training in the U.S. Navy at the Sampson, N.Y., naval training base southeast of Geneva, N.Y. The base was served by the LV, and we all arrived and left by train.

*Richard K. Hoffman
Bowling Green, Ky.*

Steven Duff's story about the LV PA's reminded me of my own Howard Fogg railroad art prints. In the early '60's I was a young fan living near the Boston

& Albany main line in North Wilbraham, Mass., and was given two Howard Fogg Alco prints by a friend's dad, who was a B&A conductor. One depicted NYC 4-8-4 Niagara 6000 and the other a night view of an FA-powered freight passing a tower. These prints, which were on a sort of fabric paper, were old when I got them, and I had just enough cherrywood to make one frame. The Niagara won out. Years later, that print was ruined in a flood, but I still had the diesel print, and it graces a wall in my train room to this day.

Peter Conlon, Beulah, Colo.

Unforgettable Hudson experience

I was pleased to read of British Columbia's former Canadian Pacific Royal Hudson No. 2860 in "Royal Restoration," the "Classics Today" entry [pages 56-57] by Editor Robert S. McGonigal. In August 1986 we took a family vacation to Vancouver, B.C., rented a car, and drove first to BCR's North Vancouver yard. There, steaming quietly, was 2860, having just arrived off an excursion. Soon my 13-year-old son and I were chatting with the engineer, and he invited us to come back in the morning and he'd give us a cab ride up to Squamish on the excursion run along Howe Sound. We took the 40-mile ride, a rare and unforgettable experience. On the return, we appreciated 2860 from a different perspective, the open-door baggage car behind the tender.

Curt Oakes, Alma, Ontario

More teen rides on the NYC

Fred Furminger's tale of his cab ride in "Boyhood Fascination with New York Central Steam" [pages 42-47] brought back a fond memory of my own cab ride in 1951, when I was 16. I rode an NYC K-3 4-6-2 on a Saturday local we called "the 2:12" from Mount Kisco, N.Y., to North White Plains.

The engineer had allowed for my trip, but the young fireman didn't like my being up there and told me to jam in behind his seat, out of sight. As we left the station, the old Pacific seemed to rock violently from side to side, and up and down, but as we got up speed on the long tangent track, it smoothed out and found its pace. I was amazed at how the fireman kept his balance on

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by Bruce G. Moffat ~ Shore Line Dispatch No. 1

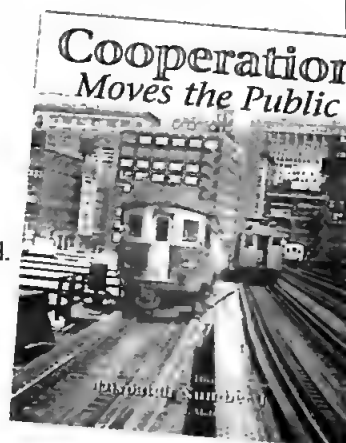
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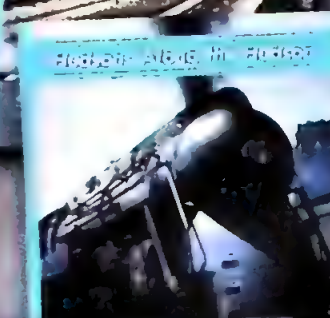
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Fast Mail



Fred B. Furminger

A 4-6-4 ride with a railroader neighbor in 1951 cemented Fred Furminger's interest in NYC steam. Later bike rides netted photos like this: 2-8-0 1131 at Fort Erie, Ont., on October 6, 1956.

that pitching deck as he went about his chores. After a few stops we were in North White Plains, cutting off the train so an electric motor could take over to go into Grand Central Terminal. I dropped off and returned home on the next northbound, in a coach with a ticket, but very thrilled.

In those days, the non-electrified portion of NYC's Harlem Division was home to several classes of Pacifics, J-2 Hudsons bumped off the B&A, and the occasional Ten-Wheeler from "the Put" (Putnam Division). They were all old and not well-maintained, and over one weekend in 1952, all the steam disappeared and commuters on Monday morning were greeted by a fleet of new RS2's. I only regret not taking photos of my trip and forgetting the number of that engine.

Ed Frevert, Falls Church, Va.

Fred Furminger's article really hit home with me. I lived in Cheektowaga, N.Y., a suburb of Buffalo, until graduating from college and moving on. During the early and mid-1970's, my best friend, Greg Dziomba, and I (both teenagers) would bike to areas around Buffalo, like Fred did, and photograph all we could of the Penn Central, Erie Lackawanna, and Lehigh Valley. Some of the best times were after a heavy snowfall when we'd walk to Broadway or Walden Avenue in Depew and catch trains speeding past. One time in 1968, I was also fortunate to accompany my

neighbor to work on the New York Central. He was a conductor on a regular local freight to Niagara Falls. What a thrill that was to a junior-high kid!

Tom Wujek, Roanoke, Va.

A visitor slips in on a weekend

Regarding George W. Hamlin's enjoyable "One Day at . . . Sanford, Fla." [pages 72-75], I was a mechanical foreman at Sanford working for the Seaboard Coast Line at the time he visited in 1975. Because it was a weekend and I was not at work, though, I was not able to "catch" him in my backyard taking pictures of "my" railroad and of the original *Auto-Train*. Usually, I "fiercely protected" my facility.

Joseph Oates, Seffner, Fla.

The 'classic' 1970's

I disagree with Charles Peck's comment ["Fast Mail," page 12, Winter 2008] that wide-nose diesels—as illustrated in "One Day at . . . Hermosa, Wyo.," [pages 68-75, Fall] by Union Pacific's Centennial and Amtrak's SDP40F models—are material just for magazines on current railroading.

For those of us who are baby boomers, the colorful and crazy 1970's are very much a part of our "classic era." In fact, a little more 1970's coverage in *CLASSIC TRAINS* wouldn't be bad!

James Rogers, Laurel, Md.

South's diesels great, but the autos?

R. R. "Dick" Wallin's "Diesels South" [pages 58-67] contained a wealth of diesel information. The time and dedication that he put into his color-slide collection must be unmatched. He surely is a true diesel historian, but his memory slipped a bit on his auto of the time. His "trusty 1958 Oldsmobile," pictured by the AT&N Alco RS1 [page 59], was a year older—it's a 1957 model, just like one my dad and mom owned.

David Hall, Scottsdale, Ariz.

I believe the Buick auto with flanged wheels at Jena, La. [page 60], is a 1939 model, not a 1938 as stated.

John Petros, Santa Clarita, Calif.

Here is a heater-car puzzle: On page 63, author Wallin states he saw on the Marianna & Blountstown an "ex-New York, Ontario & Western heater car,

made from an FTB unit." On page 87 of Robert Mohowski's 1994 book, *New York, Ontario & Western in the Diesel Age*, is a sidebar about NYO&W's two heater cars, both of which were said to be made from tenders from retired 2-10-2's. On page 95 is a list of O&W's diesel dispositions after it shut down in 1957. Of its nine FTB's, two were sold to B&O, which retired them in 1962 and traded them in to EMD. The other seven were sold to an equipment dealer. About a decade later, New York Central bought them for trade-in to EMD on new GP-40's, and EMD had them scrapped.

Mr. Mohowski states that one O&W heater car was scrapped about 1970, while the other was sold to the Fernwood, Columbia & Gulf, a southern Mississippi short line, in 1953. Could this have been the car Mr. Wallin saw? Moreover, could it be extant today?

Al Shumard, Greensboro, N.C.

For the record, Florida won

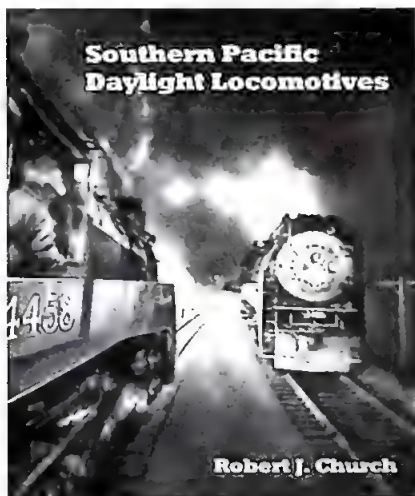
In Max Bilinski's fine article "Catching the Gulf Wind" [pages 81-82 in "The Way It Was"], he wasn't sure of the outcome of the football game he attended in 1952 in Jacksonville between Florida and Georgia. The date was October 25, and the final score was Florida 30, Georgia 0. I was born in 1962 and so, of course, was not around, but I looked it up.

Louie Ferraroni
Staten Island, N.Y. 

Got a comment?

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'Standard Railroad of the South'

Atlantic Coast Line in many ways was a big "Family" patriarch

The Atlantic Coast Line Railroad was true to its name: it linked an important string of coastal cities between Richmond, Va., and Florida, paralleling the Atlantic Ocean along the way. Its major traffic flows were north-south along the seaboard, and its New York-Florida passenger trains—handled by the Pennsylvania to Washington and the Richmond, Fredericksburg & Potomac to Richmond—were widely known and heavily patronized for nine decades. But ACL was also a major railroad holding company, and its "family" of lines stretched to Cincinnati, St. Louis, Memphis, and New Orleans.

This large, powerful system was one of several in the Southeast formed in the late 1800's. Like its rivals Southern Railway and Seaboard Air Line, ACL was a creation of northern financiers who first wove together formerly separate companies through financial control, then merged them into one entity. Although ACL's earliest predecessors dated to 1830 in Virginia (Petersburg Railroad) and 1834 in North Carolina (Wilmington & Weldon), not until after the Civil War did real interest surface in forming a single north-south system. Baltimore bankers Benjamin F. Newcomer and William T. Walters began buying railroads that formed a route from Richmond to Charleston, S.C., with branches to the Atlantic on the east and Augusta, Ga., on the west. They sought better transportation for manufactured goods to the South and for raw materials and agricultural products moving north. As early as 1871, advertisements



David W. Salter

There is no mistaking ACL boss Champ Davis' favorite color—Royal Purple—as E6 518 nears Cascade Road leaving greater Atlanta for Waycross, Ga., with local train 101 in October 1958.

began to appear labeling the combined route "the Atlantic Coast Line."

After three decades of common ownership and coordinated operations, most of the predecessors were brought together under one entity, Atlantic Coast Line Railroad Co., on April 23, 1900. (The 343-mile Charleston & Western Carolina, controlled after 1897, wasn't merged into ACL until 1959, along with 75-mile neighbor Columbia, Newberry & Laurens.) The new ACL was financially robust from the beginning, and soon had taken control (through majority stock ownership) of the Louisville & Nashville, which stretched from the

Ohio River and St. Louis to Atlanta and New Orleans. L&N, in turn, controlled the Nashville, Chattanooga & St. Louis, which ran from Atlanta to Memphis via Nashville. Linking L&N at Atlanta and ACL at Augusta was another acquisition, the Georgia Railroad. ACL and L&N jointly leased the "Georgia Road" and its affiliated companies, Atlanta & West Point and Western Railway of Alabama. ACL essentially finished its route map with its 1902 purchase of the Plant System, reaching from Charleston, S.C., south to Jacksonville and Tampa, Fla., and west to Montgomery, Ala.

The Plant System provided the Coast Line with a well-located main line from Richmond to Florida. Merchandise, forest products, and Florida produce flowed rapidly along, augmented by sand and—from west-central Florida's "Bone Valley"—a growing volume of phosphate. For Northeast-Florida passengers, ACL, being fastest, was the route of choice. As early as 1888, ACL gained notice with its seasonal *Florida Special*, advertised as the first New York-Miami all-Pullman flyer. Although ACL never reached Miami, it established an early relationship with the Florida East Coast to forward its trains south from Jacksonville.

While the *Florida Special*, *Havana Special*, *Miamian*, *Everglades*, *Palmetto*, and other flyers were always the back-



William J. Husa photo; Louis A. Marre collection

Dual-service Pacifics were routine for Coast Line, evidenced by 1554, a 1920 product of Alco's Richmond Works, hauling loads of cypress stumps at Lake City, Fla., on December 2, 1950.

bone of ACL's service, the road was also the premier forwarder of the Midwest-Florida fleet. Most were the "Dixie Route" trains from the L&N/NC&StL that ran over Central of Georgia from Atlanta to the ACL at Albany, Ga., but some came to ACL off other routes: Illinois Central's *City of Miami* and *Seminole* via Birmingham and CofG to Albany, and Pennsy/L&N's *South Wind* via Birmingham to ACL at Montgomery.

Rising fortunes in the Roaring '20's

ACL's fortunes continued to rise through the 1920's, and it was soon double-tracking its Richmond-Savannah main stem and improving other routes. The "family" continued to grow, with a joint lease (with L&N) in 1925 of the Clinchfield (Spartanburg, S.C.-Elk-horn City, Ky.) and purchase in 1926 of the bankrupt Atlanta, Birmingham & Atlantic. ACL renamed the AB&A as Atlanta, Birmingham & Coast, and kept it as a separately run property. The Y-shaped AB&C provided an important missing link between ACL's south Georgia shop town and hub of Waycross with L&N at Birmingham and Atlanta. ACL's "family lines"—a term first used in the 1920's and formally applied to the group in the 1970's—totaled over 12,000 miles at peak, of which ACL owned about 5,500. ACL's stature prompted its advertising department to proclaim it "The Standard Railroad of the South," with no record of apologies to PRR.

ACL's relatively flat profile let it make good use of a large fleet (235) of dual-service Pacifics, equally at home on fast passenger trains, long strings of refrigerator cars, or merchandise freights. ACL's early steam roster also had many Ten-Wheelers (called "Copperheads" after their copper-rimmed stacks), which ACL used in both passenger and light freight service, and Mikados for drag freights. Its heaviest freight engines were 20 2-10-2's bought in 1926 for the up-and-down "Bow Line" from Waycross to Montgomery.

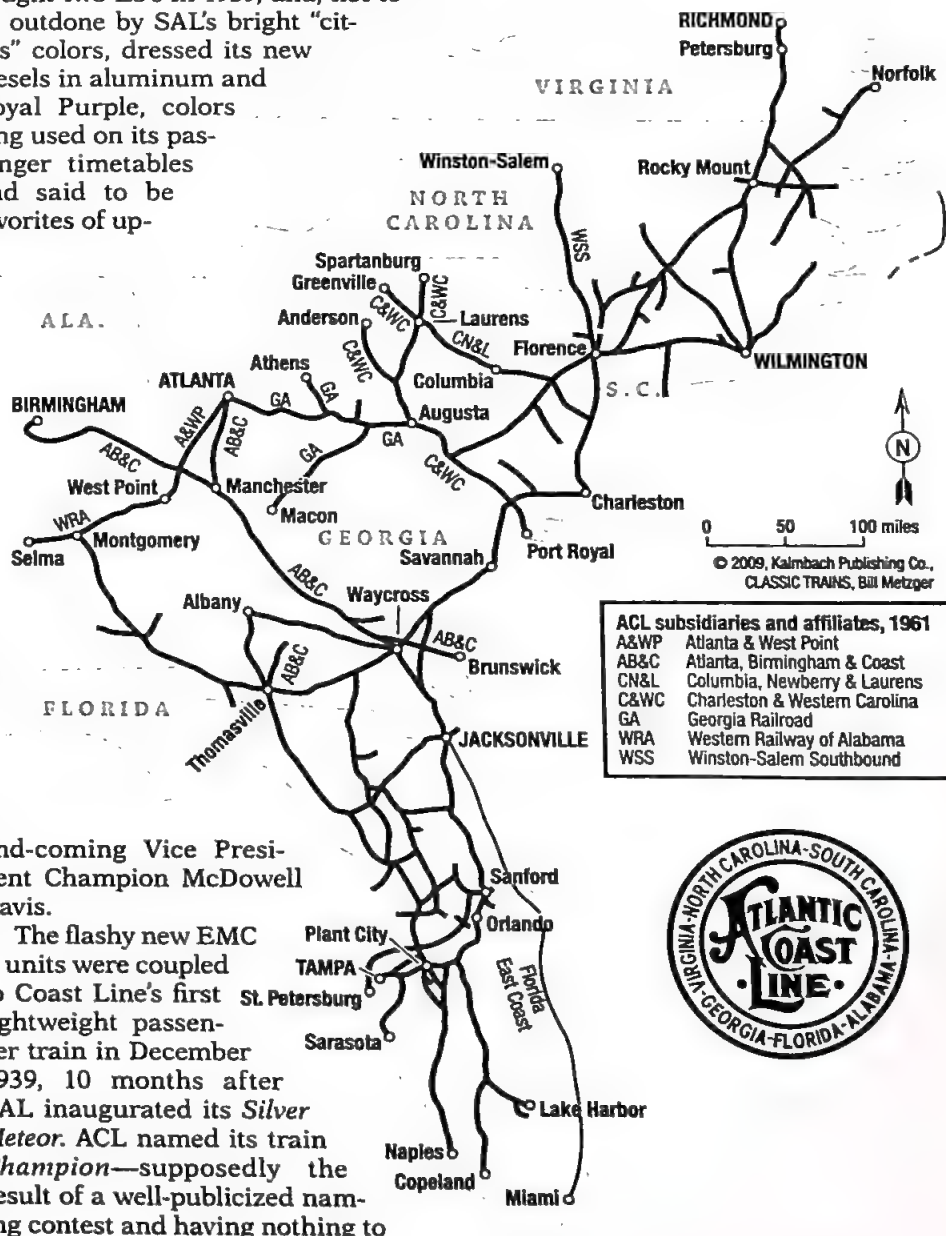
Coast Line's deep pockets—helped always by a steady stream of dividends from coal-rich L&N—let the company weather the Depression without lapsing into receivership, a fate that thinly financed neighbor SAL could not escape. But as tourist travel picked up in the

late 1930's, Seaboard—anxious to attract any business it could—beat ACL to the punch with both diesels and streamliners. SAL put colorful Electro-Motive Corp. E4's on its *Orange Blossom Special* in 1938, but the ever-conservative Coast Line went back that year to its favorite supplier, Baldwin, for 12 huge 4-8-4 passenger engines. They were fast and powerful, but had counterbalancing problems and could not match the efficiency and servicing advantages of diesels.

The Coast Line changed course and bought two E3's in 1939, and, not to be outdone by SAL's bright "citrus" colors, dressed its new diesels in aluminum and Royal Purple, colors long used on its passenger timetables and said to be favorites of up-

do with Davis, although historians have raised an eyebrow over the claim. Regardless, Champ Davis, who became ACL president in 1942, remained a dedicated fan of the purple, and by the mid-1950's the color adorned everything from passenger cars to maintenance-of-way cranes to depot trim.

Although ACL was able to acquire only a few dozen diesels, mostly EMD E's and FT's, before 1945, it rapidly ramped up when wartime restrictions were lifted. Steadily larger numbers arrived through the late '40's, all EMD's



Fallen Flags Remembered



David W. Salter



Charles K. "Ken" Marsh Jr.

A mix of F's, a GP7, and FT's in both purple and black, led by FP7 886, rolls a southbound freight near Cordele, Ga. (top), in 1959. At Waycross on March 28, 1964 (above), two Alco C628's and a GE U25C, bound for hilly Alabama, herald ACL's pioneering choice of six-motor diesels.

except for a few switchers from Baldwin and Alco. In 1950–51 alone, EMD delivered some 350 units. A few more came in 1952, and ACL's roster of 564 diesels was complete; 154 were GP7's—ACL had no need for GP9's. Steam was almost gone by 1952, but a few Pacifics and Ten-Wheelers ran on two former AB&C branches in Georgia until 1955.

ACL updated its passenger trains in the late '40's. Like many other roads, it received a large lightweight car fleet in the postwar years, allowing the flagship *Champions* and *Florida Special* to be fully re-equipped for the 1949–50 winter season. ACL also completely rebuilt its heavyweight coaches to lightweight standards, and often used them on its premier runs. Besides the Florida headliners, ACL also ran a strong network of secondary passenger runs, including through Pullmans to such destinations as Wilmington, N.C., and Naples, Fla.

These improvements were just part of a huge modernization program the

Coast Line undertook after World War II. ACL installed thousands of new freight cars, many with roller bearings years before they became standard; CTC signaling; train radio; and many other physical plant improvements. Many of the changes were first applied to the old AB&C, which ACL merged as its Western Division on January 1, 1946. The complete overhaul of this once run-down property turned it into a major Midwest–Florida artery, and freight volume surged. ACL also rerouted the *Dixie Flyer*, which had always taken the CofG to reach ACL rails, over its newly rebuilt Atlanta–Waycross route.

Like much of the industry, ACL endured some slim years in the late 1950's. It ceased dozens of local passenger runs, pulled up branch lines, and bought no locomotives and little rolling stock. In 1957, Champ Davis retired at age 78 and was replaced by W. Thomas Rice, the young president of the RF&P. Rice promptly ended the maintenance-

intensive purple paint scheme and replaced it with basic black, albeit with aluminum lettering and yellow striping. At the end of the decade, he oversaw the relocation of ACL's long-time Wilmington headquarters to a new general office building in Jacksonville.

Merger talks with rival Seaboard

Perhaps Rice's greatest departure from ACL orthodoxy was his immediate merger overture to arch-rival Seaboard. ACL had tried unsuccessfully for years to acquire FEC, a logical but elusive quest that Rice dropped. Instead, he sought a "parallel" union. The proposal reflected growing recognition that the railroads' most serious competitors were outside the industry.

As the merger process wound its way through regulatory and legal hurdles, brisk freight business returned in the early 1960's as Sunbelt growth and industrialization accelerated. ACL bought its first second-generation diesels in 1963, nine EMD GP30's. These were followed shortly by new six-axle, high-horsepower models that EMD, GE, and Alco had just put in their catalogs—a marked departure from nearly two decades of EMD dominance. ACL liked the six-axle power, especially its ability to reduce the long strings of F's and Geeps required on lines like the Western Division, and eventually bought 64 of the units, versus only 34 second-generation B-B's.

Passenger traffic continued to be strong, although subject to the general industry-wide decline. Overall, ACL's strong Northeast-to-Florida market kept its passenger miles and income well above the norm. It fielded a refurbished *Florida Special* for the train's 75th anniversary in the 1962–63 season, and as late as 1964 was buying surplus

lightweight cars from other railroads (and also E8's from the Katy). Even though ACL lost its longtime Miami partner when a protracted strike took FEC out of the through passenger business in 1963, Coast Line quickly arranged to use a combined ACL-SAL alternative route through central Florida.

In spring 1967, the Supreme Court disposed of the last challenge to merger with the Seaboard, and on July 1, Seaboard Coast Line came into being. Some wags proclaimed that the initials really meant "still Coast Line," a reference to the dominance ACL exerted over the combined system in many ways, from equipment colors to consolidation of operations at Jacksonville to Tom Rice's continuation as president.

At first, little trackage was abandoned, but by the 1980's some former Seaboard main lines had been taken up or severed. SCL kept the best passenger trains of both predecessors, and by the time of Amtrak's 1971 inception, had become known as one of the few remaining pro-passenger carriers. Today, the New York-Florida market under Amtrak remains as its most heavily patronized long-distance route, and virtually all of it is conducted over original Coast Line rails—one of the railroad's many enduring legacies. **I**

COAST LINE FACT FILE

(Comparative figures are for 1929 and 1966)

Route-miles: 5,155; 5,743

Locomotives: 1,007; 629

Passenger cars: 786; 361

Freight cars: 32,644; 31,284

Headquarters cities: Wilmington, N.C., until 1961, then Jacksonville, Fla.

Special interest group: Atlantic Coast Line & Seaboard Air Line Railroads Historical Society, P.O. Box 4141, Bay Pines, FL 33744; www.aclsal.org

Notable passenger trains: *Champion*, *Florida Special*, *Dixie Flagler*, *South Wind*

Recommended reading: *A History of the Atlantic Coast Line Railroad*, by Glenn Hoffmann (CSX, 1998); *ACL Passenger Service: The Postwar Years*, by Larry Goolsby (TLC, 1999); *ACL, The Diesel Years*, by Warren Calloway (Withers Publishing, 1993)

Source: *Historical Guide to North American Railroads* (Kalmbach, 2000).

Before the North Shore Line

By Edward W. Tobin



Waukegan was the birthplace of the Chicago North Shore & Milwaukee Railroad, one of the nation's premier interurban electric railways. Author Ed Tobin recounts the railroad's humble origins as the Bluff City Electric Street Railway and traces its rapid evolution into the high speed Chicago & Milwaukee Electric Railway, taking the story up to the time that the company came under Insull control. This 224 page book is packed with never before published information and photographs depicting the railway in its early days. You will also learn about A.C. Frost, a tireless promoter who helped create "America's fastest interurban."

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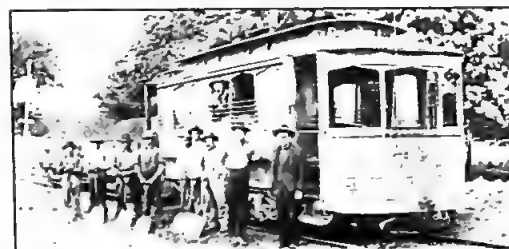


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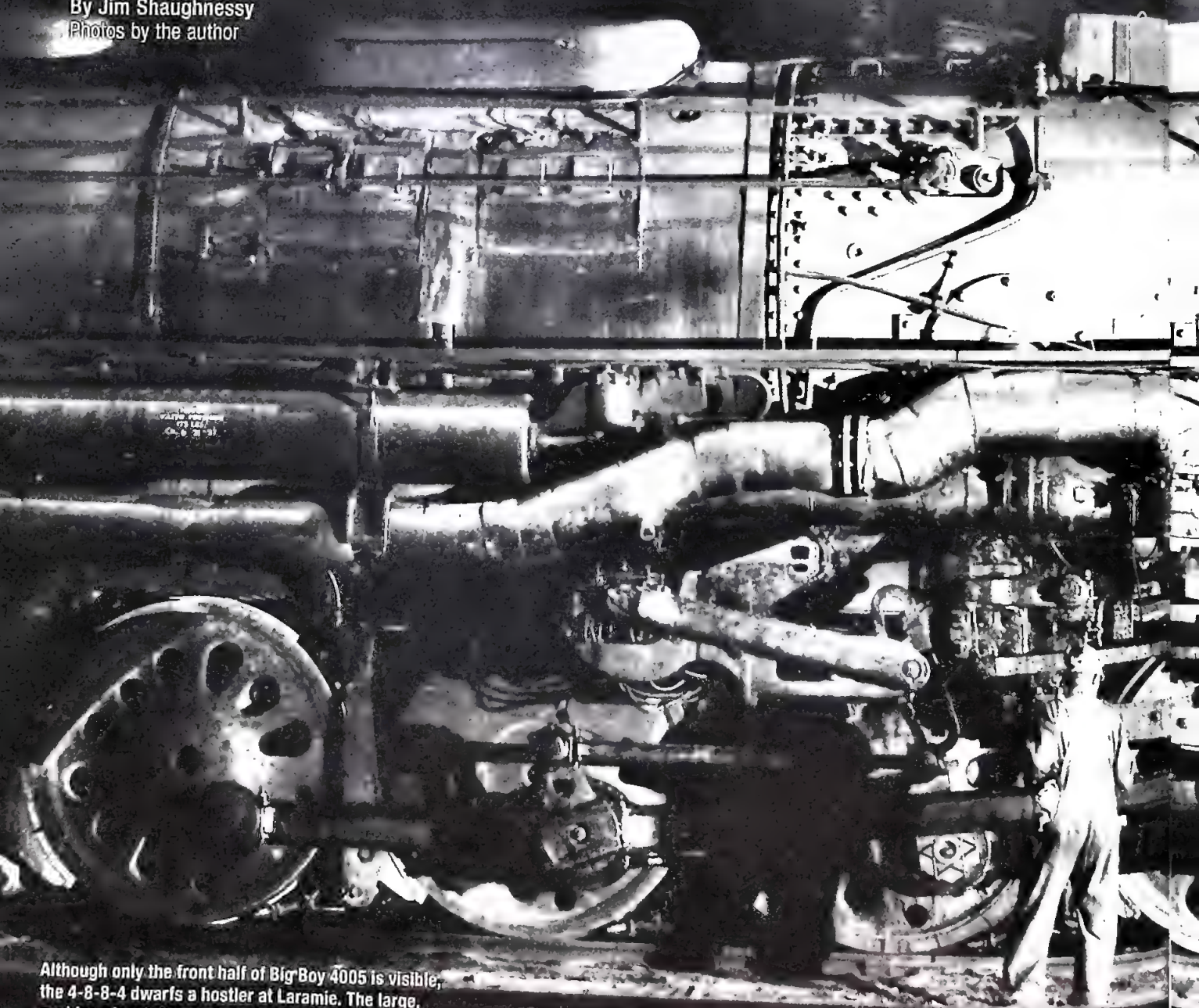
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The **Shaughnessy** Files

BIG BOYS *by night* . . .

UP's biggest steam power lured a Northeasterner to Wyoming

By Jim Shaughnessy
Photos by the author



Although only the front half of Big Boy 4005 is visible, the 4-8-8-4 dwarfs a hostler at Laramie. The large, snaking pipe delivers steam to the rear cylinder.

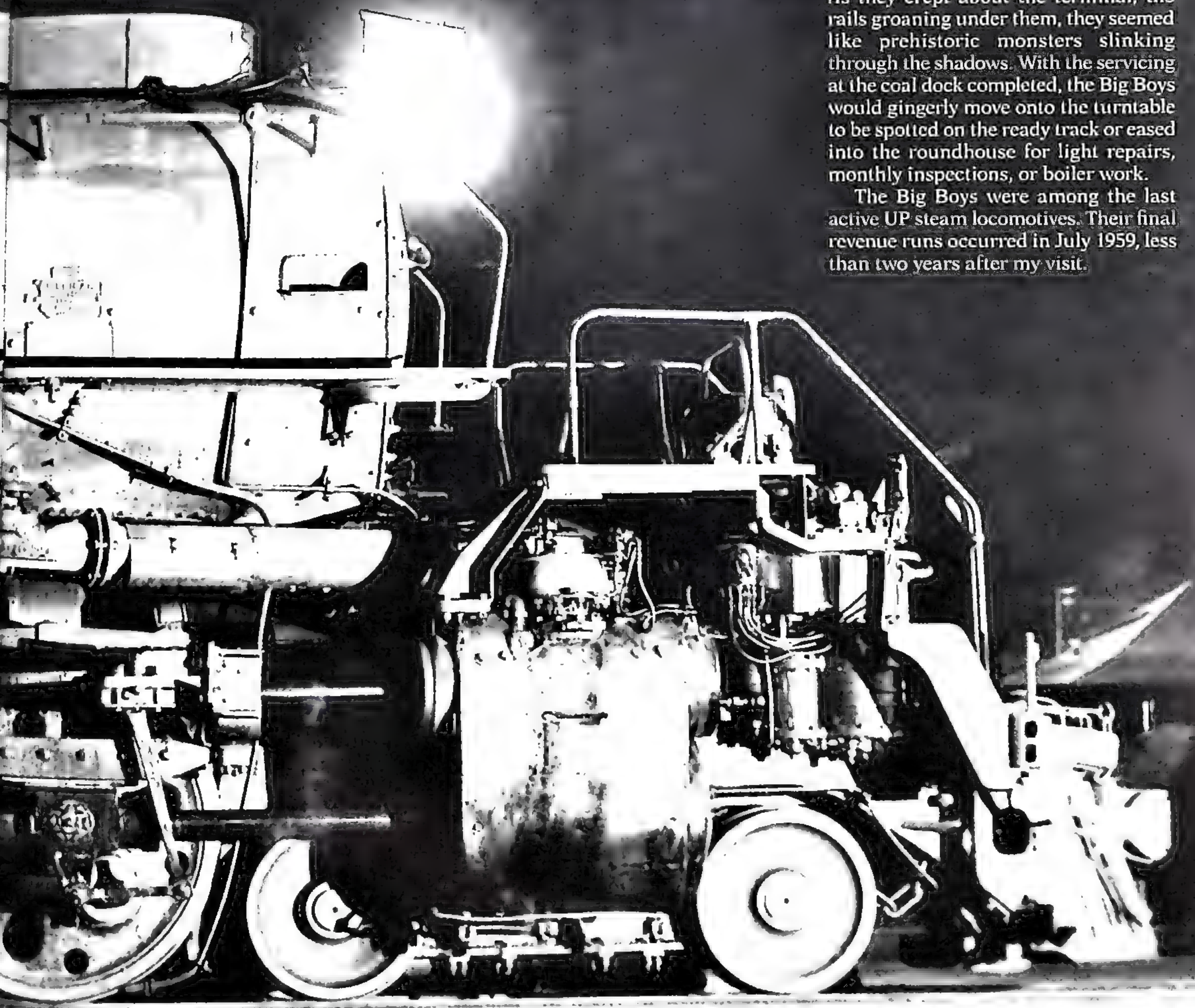
Sherman Hill on Union Pacific's transcontinental route on the high plains of Wyoming between Cheyenne and Laramie was a magnet for rail aficionados in the 1950's. There were other steeper, more scenic locations, but Sherman had the Holy Grail of locomotives—the Big Boy!

On August 16, 1957, I stepped off Burlington's *Denver Zephyr* in its namesake city and met a college friend living there at the time. Three days later I was heading north in his '56 Ford for a two-day pilgrimage to the Hill. I soon found myself driving the red gravel roads,

crossing cattle guards, and passing through tunnels under great embankments near Dale Junction and Hermosa Tunnel. All day I witnessed a parade of trains headed by Geeps, F units, E9's, gas turbines, and of course Big Boys.

That evening I went to the Laramie engine terminal, where I had arranged to take some night photos. A huge coal dock dominated the facility. Laborers swarmed around the engines, greasing side rods, oiling valve gear, checking bolts, loading supplies into the cab, and even cleaning the windows and headlights. In the darkness, the great machines loomed even larger than normal. As they crept about the terminal, the rails groaning under them, they seemed like prehistoric monsters slinking through the shadows. With the servicing at the coal dock completed, the Big Boys would gingerly move onto the turntable to be spotted on the ready track or eased into the roundhouse for light repairs, monthly inspections, or boiler work.

The Big Boys were among the last active UP steam locomotives. Their final revenue runs occurred in July 1959, less than two years after my visit.



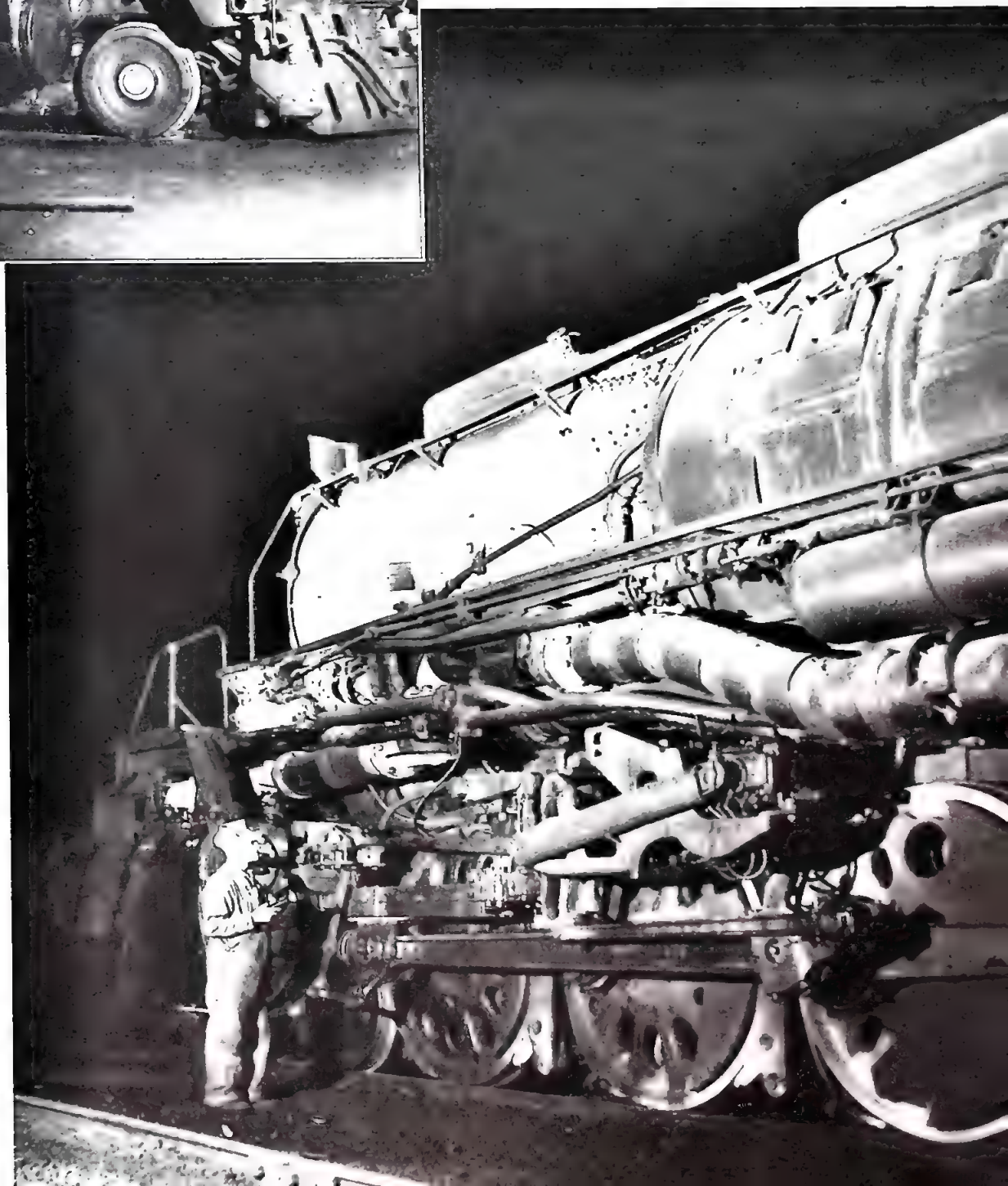
Blurred steam forms a ghostly cloud over engine 4008 in a time exposure on the Laramie ready track. Moisture from a light rain adds to the eerie scene. Only the UP had Big Boys, and Alco built them all: 20 in 1941, 5 in '44.





Inside the sooty Laramie roundhouse, a wrench-wielding worker stands on the roomy front platform of No. 4017. The immense vise in the foreground hints at the outsized proportions of UP's steam goliaths.

A night hostler looks over the 4005 at Laramie; his puny flashlight hardly seems up to the task of probing the myriad nooks and crannies of the 133-foot-long, 1.2-million-pound, 38-wheel locomotive and tender.



...and day



Viewed from a rock formation just east of Dale Junction, Big Boy 4009 passes with a westbound freight on August 20, 1957. The train is on the single-track Harriman Line, built by UP in 1953 to provide an easier ascent up the east slope of Sherman Hill than the double-track main line, which itself was largely the product of turn-of-the-century changes to the original transcontinental route of the 1860's. The convergence of the Harriman Line and main line at Dale Junction is visible in the photo at far right, which also shows Shaughnessy's buddy's '56 Ford.





Extra 4015 East, having climbed up Sherman Hill from Laramie, approaches the twin Hermosa Tunnels, a few hundred yards ahead. Compare this view with Doug Harrop's similar photos on page 68 of our Fall 2008 issue.





Big Boy 4011 makes a smoky exit from the north Hermosa tunnel with an eastbound. The tunnels are part of 28 miles of new line opened in 1901 between Buford and Laramie to supplement or replace the original alignment.



Making good time east of Dale Junction on the 1901 main line, an unidentified Big Boy sails eastward with a single F3A diesel tucked in behind its centipede tender. Ahead 3 miles: the 8,013-foot summit at Sherman. ■



Of chicks, rollers, and the caboose as a target

A 1965 ride on Frisco's mixed out of Kansas City was educational, in several ways

By Paul J. Dolkos

Tom Underwood

My spirits fell when I received orders for my first U.S. Air Force permanent-duty assignment, at the Richards-Gebaur Air Force Base just south of Kansas City, Mo. I had hardly been west of the Appalachian Mountains, and relocating to the "big middle" didn't sound very exciting to me. My outlook improved when I checked the *Official Guide* and learned that Kansas City was served by 15 railroads. Perhaps things wouldn't be so bad, after all.

The Kansas City railroad scene did not disappoint. The time was 1962, and there was lots of what we came to call first-generation diesel power and bright paint schemes to be seen. Skirting the base was a secondary Frisco line to Springfield, Mo., via Clinton, that par-



Tom Underwood



Two photos, Paul J. Dolkos

Twice in spring 1964, I chased Frisco's Clinton mixed. That May, it neared the old Belton depot (above and right) behind its regular engine, Baldwin V01000 236. When Tom Underwood and I rode a year later, 236 again was in charge as it rolled into Belton (top). Emboldened by no "pot shots" being taken at the caboose southbound, we rode the cupola north (opposite page).

alleled the main line, some miles to the west, which went via Fort Scott, Kans. The Clinton Subdivision still hosted a mixed train, something that had disappeared long ago in my native East.

The train was in the timetable [page 33] as No. 59 southward from Kansas City to Clinton and 58 northward on the return. Passengers were carried in the caboose, which I discovered to be an old wooden car. The only obvious visual clue that this wasn't just another local freight was the one or two baggage cars carried in the consist just ahead of the caboose.

My friend from the East, Tom Under-

wood, eagerly sought out opportunities to ride obscure passenger services and get as many "green lines" as possible marked in his railroad atlas. So in April 1965, about a year after I'd chased the mixed a couple of times, Tom journeyed west to join me to ride the train.

On April 19, we caught No. 59 at Belton, Mo., a flag stop 28 miles south of its starting point of Frisco's 19th Street yard in Kansas City's west bottoms, a mile west and north of Union Station. In fact, all stations on the line were listed as flag stops since passengers were anything but a high





Two photos, Paul J. Dolkos

These May '64 photos at Latour (above) and East Lynne (left) give no clue that this is a mixed train, but isn't an 18-year-old Baldwin switcher in such pastoral settings enough?



accepted practice until the late 1970's.

As I recall, our train did little or no work on the return trip. I detrained at Belton, where my car was parked, but Tom rode on to Centropolis, a mile south of the big Sheffield junction on the east side of Kansas City, the western limit of passenger service Frisco offered on the branch. The train continued on from Centropolis using Kansas City Terminal Railway tracks across the city to reach its home yard.

With no notes taken, many details of this trip made now four decades ago are a bit fuzzy. Interestingly, a friend recently purchased a Frisco Eastern Division employee Time Table 43, effective December 3, 1961. On the Clinton Subdivision table some-



Paul J. Dolkos

Upon our arrival at Clinton, 236 was turned on the turntable (above), then went off to do some switching. We went downtown for lunch and were back at the depot (right) in plenty of time for the 2:30 return departure.

one, possibly a railroad official, had made notes during a June 28, 1962, ride on the mixed to Clinton and back, detailing where orders were picked up, cars dropped, and "horrible" track-gauge and alignment problems south of Harrisonville. The train had VO1000 231, caboose 96, and 10 cars out of Kansas City. Reading the annotated timetable brought back a lot of memories of our trip.

The notes mention dropping three cars at my Air Force base, whose station was Belvidere. Gosh, I lived on the base for three years and don't remember the railroad sidings! Later Frisco track charts, from 1979, show three stub tracks and a run-around serving a spot for explosives (air-to-air missiles, I suspect), a fuel-unloading rack, a warehouse, and a cold-storage building. I guess I didn't know the line as well as I thought I did. I should have taken notes like our mystery rider did.

The mixed continued to run until 1967. A decade later, a trestle north of



Tom Underwood

Blairstown burned, and freight service was cut back to East Lynne; it ran into the 1980's. Today, a remnant from Grandview, near where the Frisco had ducked under the Kansas City Southern main line, to Belvidere, is switched by the KCS. Track beyond Belvidere, to

Belton (3 miles), is occasionally used by the museum group Belton, Grandview & Kansas City Railroad (www.belton-railroad.org), which on weekends during May through October operates excursion trains from Belton south for 5 miles on the old Clinton Sub. ■

Steam ^{in the} Eastern Townships

The territory east of Montreal was
fertile ground for steam action in July 1954

By Dwight A. Smith • Photos by the author

On July 20, 1954, the second day of author
Smith's two-day hunt for steam in Quebec,
GTS-3a Mikado 3702 departs Sherbrooke
with CN freight P490 to Portland, Maine.





CP D10h Ten-Wheeler 1104 stands at Foster (above) on July 19 with a local freight out of Farnham. After some switching, the seven-car train heads east for Sherbrooke (right).

Fifty-five years ago, steam locomotives were fast disappearing from the railroads serving my home territory in New Hampshire and Vermont. The Maine Central's Mountain Division and Beecher Falls branch were completely dieselized, as was the Canadian Pacific's Vermont line from the Canadian border down through Newport to Wells River. The Boston & Maine was 100 percent diesel north of Concord, N.H., and White River Junction, Vt. During 1951-52 the Rutland Railroad went from all-steam to all-diesel in relatively short order. One ray of hope came from the Canadian National's two New England subsidiaries that continued in steam into the mid-1950's. These were the Grand Trunk line from Island Pond, Vt., to Portland, Maine, and the Central Vermont Railway from St. Albans, Vt., to New London, Conn.

By 1954 I had made pretty thorough photo coverage of steam on the CV and GT. Now I was ready to broaden my horizons. Upon learning that steam still ruled on the Canadian Pacific and Canadian National in the Eastern Town-



Although steam was in full retreat across North America, Smith saw only two diesels during his two days in the Eastern Townships. The first, CP E8 No. 1800, pulls into Foster with Montreal-Sherbrooke train 202; La Grange-built Nos. 1800-1802 were the only E units in Canada.



Sutton-Drummondville mixed M251, pictured in two views at Foster, sported a 4-6-0 up front (left) and a wooden combine in beautiful varnished maroon on the rear (above).



ships of Quebec (roughly the area between the eastern suburbs of Montreal and the city of Sherbrooke), I laid plans to make a two-day visit to see and photograph steam operations north of the border.

On Sunday evening, July 18, I packed my car with my overnight bag, timetables, road maps, camera, film, snacks, and beverages in preparation for an early start the next morning. On Monday, after reaching Richford, Vt., and crossing the border into Quebec, I drove another few miles and found the CP's two-stall enginehouse at Sutton, Que. One dark stall contained a semi-streamlined 4-4-4 Jubilee, which had arrived from Montreal with a passenger local the previous evening and was to leave later in the day for the return trip.

The other Sutton-based train was No. M251, a mixed train that had already departed on its way north to Drummondville. With no "photo ops" at Sutton, I quickly set my course for the hamlet of Foster, Que., where the Drummondville branch crossed CP's main line from Montreal to Sherbrooke and on across Maine to Saint John, New Brunswick. I arrived at Foster in time to watch a local freight at work in the small yard. The freight originated west of Foster at the mainline division point of Farnham, Que., and was head-



The second and last diesel of Smith's trip, on a CN wayfreight at Waterloo, was another rare bird: H12-64 7617, a boiler-equipped, light-axle-loading version of FM's H12-44 switcher.

ed to Sherbrooke. The power was one of CP's ubiquitous class D10 4-6-0's, No. 1104. Soon the local headed out of town with its seven cars, and quiet returned to Foster.

Next to arrive was the mixed that had started its day in Sutton. It pulled in from the north, which surprised me until I learned of its somewhat unusual operation: After running from Sutton to Foster as train M251, the mixed made a trip north to Waterloo, 4.5 miles up the Drummondville branch, as train M255, returned to Foster as M260, and finally resumed its trip to Drummondville as M251. The mixed consisted of D10 4-6-0 No. 1074 towing a boxcar and a wooden combine—a beautiful, varnished-maroon holdover from an earlier era—riding on six-wheel trucks.

Upon its return to Foster, the mixed waited for the arrival of Montreal–Sherbrooke passenger train 202. I was expecting steam, but darn it, 202 rolled in with shiny E8 diesel No. 1800, one of three E8's owned by Canadian Pacific. The only E units in Canada, they were acquired in 1949 to dieselize the *Alouette*, a day train between Montreal and Boston via CP and B&M.

After 202 left, the diminutive mixed again headed up the branch, this time to go all the way to Drummondville. Mixed M251 ran 133 miles in a day, going from Sutton to Drummondville and a return including the 9-mile round-trip between Foster and Waterloo.

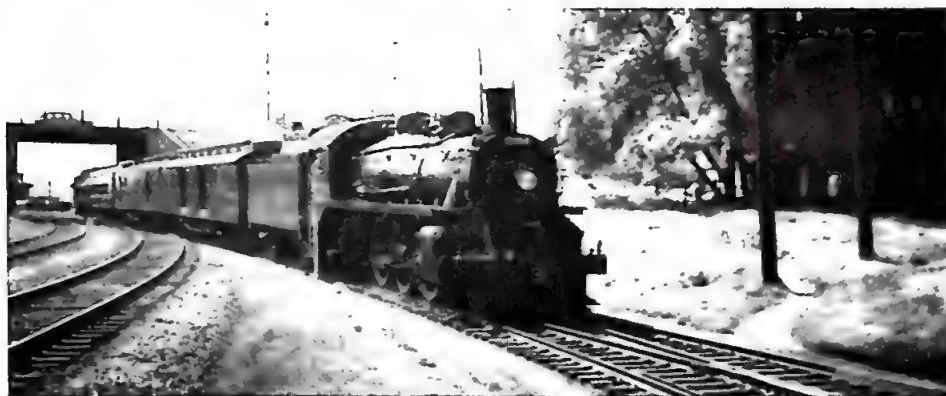
Rare diesel at Waterloo, steam action at Sherbrooke

Upon leaving Foster, I drove up to Waterloo, where a CN branch from Montreal crossed the CP's Drummondville branch and then terminated. The only activity in town was a road-switcher on a CN local freight working the yard. Fortunately, this was only the second and final diesel that I saw on my trip. As I later learned, the unit, CN No. 7617, was a rare A1A-A1A Fairbanks-Morse model H12-64, one of 30 built (all for CN) by FM affiliate Canadian Locomotive Co. in 1951–52.

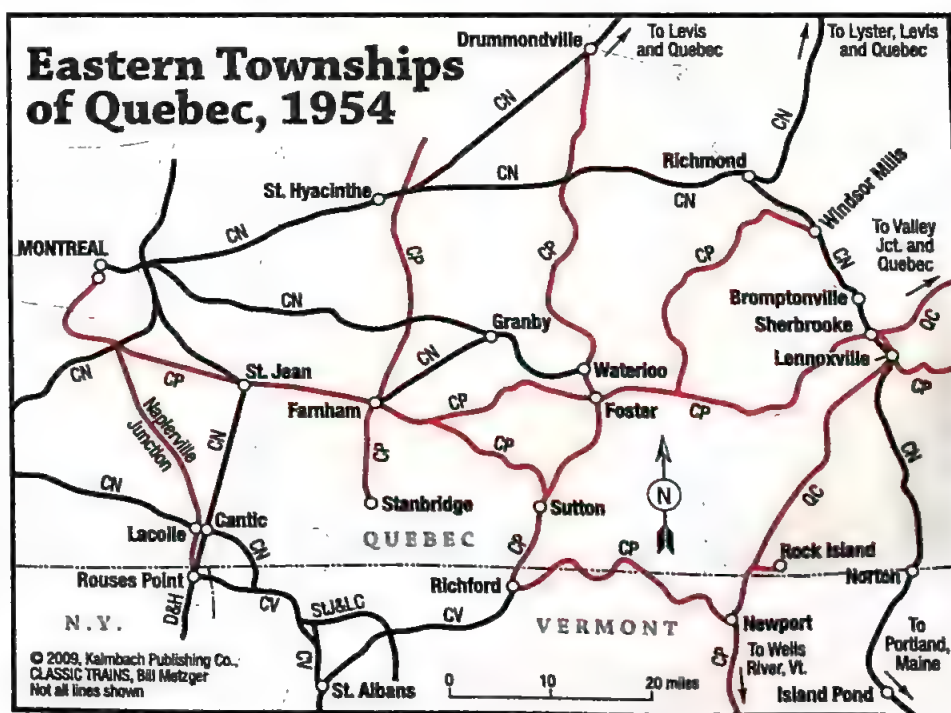
From Waterloo I highballed to Sherbrooke, a city served by Canadian National, Canadian Pacific, and CP subsidiary Quebec Central Railway. At the CP-QC passenger station, I watched the arrival of QC train 2, which originated up the line at Levis, across the St. Lawrence River from Quebec City. Power on No. 2 was QC class G2 Pacific 2573, a handsome engine despite a somewhat oversized smokestack. Later in the afternoon I was able to watch QC train 5 depart for Levis with two head-end



At Sherbrooke, the engineer of handsome G2 Pacific 2573 looks around his steed after bringing Quebec Central train 2 in from Levis. The 4-6-2 was built in 1908, modernized in 1926.

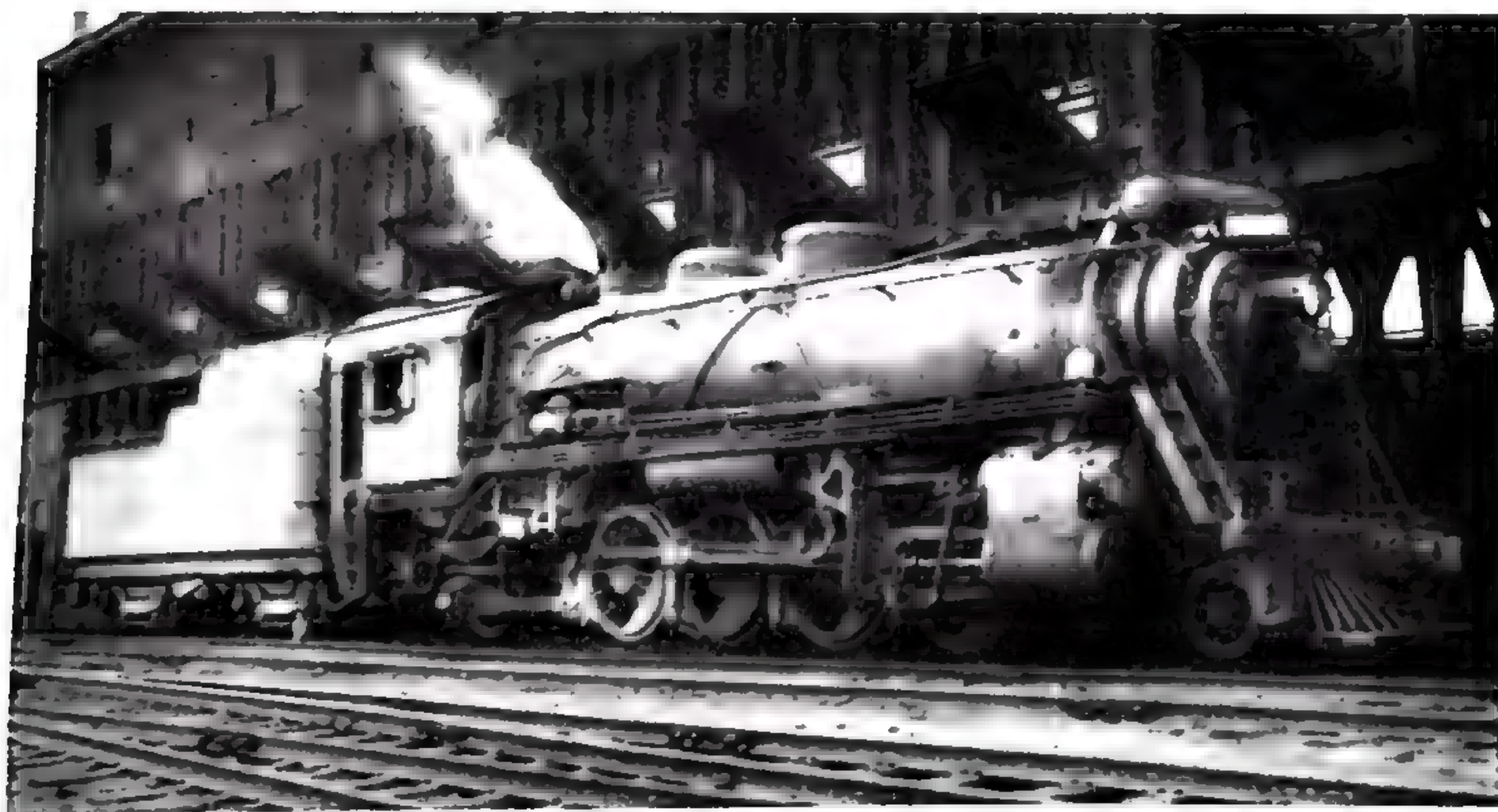


Another of the CP system's 166 G2's, No. 2554, leaves Sherbrooke with QC train 5 to Levis, located on the south bank of the St. Lawrence River, across from the city of Quebec.





After a night in Richmond enjoying the sounds of steam railroading from his trackside hotel, Smith began July 20 at the CN station. In the top photo, J-3b Pacific 5073 off train 41 passes big sister J-7b 5292, taking water with train 11. After dropping a baggage car, No. 11 (above) resumes its journey from Island Pond, Vt., to Montreal, while train 602 sits at left behind J-3a 5037, ready to depart for Sherbrooke.



Over at the Richmond engine terminal, CN Mikado 3241 simmers beneath the big coal wharf.

cars and a coach behind another G2, Quebec Central 2554. Down in the yards, I found a third immaculate QC G2, No. 2536; though her stack was capped, she looked otherwise ready to fire up and go on short notice. Also in the yard were a couple of D10 4-6-0's, Nos. 851 and 1051, with main rods off, looking as though they were soon to be hauled out of town dead in a freight train. Toward dusk, a doubleheaded QC freight departed for Valley Junction with G2 2573 leading D10 940. I noted that No. 2573 was the same engine that brought passenger train 2 into Sherbrooke earlier in the day.

The day was drawing to a close, so I left Sherbrooke for a short drive up the St. Francois River valley to the town of Richmond, a CN division point astride



Richmond's Hotel Brunswick, where Smith spent the previous night, presides over CN 42's July 20 departure for Quebec City behind 4-6-2 5604.

the Montreal-Portland main line, as well as a junction with a secondary line to Quebec City. I had reserved a room in the Brunswick Hotel, located across the street from the CN station and yards. I soon began to enjoy the benefits of my room facing the tracks, being lulled to sleep by locomotive whistles, crossing bells, couplers banging, and other sounds of steam railroading in a busy yard.

Pacifics on parade in Richmond

I was up bright and early the next morning and headed over to the yard. In the span of a little over one hour starting at 7 a.m., I witnessed two passenger-train arrivals, one from Lyster on the Quebec City line and one from Island Pond, Vt., on the Portland line. After much switching and transferring of passengers, mail, and express, three passenger trains departed, one each to Montreal, Quebec City, and Sherbrooke—all powered by Pacifics.

While in Richmond, I also had opportunities to watch and photograph three CN Mikados under steam; one, the 3418, departed on freight train 506



CN Mike 3218 hurries north out of Richmond with train 506 for Joffre Yard, located south of Quebec City. Sister S-1 3254 still runs, at Steamtown National Historic Site in Scranton, Pa.



CN Pacific 5037, seen earlier in the day at Richmond, is headed back that way as she skims out of Sherbrooke with passenger local 601.



Back in the U.S., Smith found six-wheel switcher No. 7530 of CN subsidiary Grand Trunk drilling freight cars at Island Pond, Vt. The 0-6-0 is a USRA design, built by Alco in 1919.

to Joffre, near Quebec City. Down in the yard, I spotted CN 2-8-0 No. 2569 being readied for a run. Later this engine blasted out of town running backwards with a long string of boxcars headed down the Portland line some 18 miles to a paper mill at Bromptonville, Que. My final shots at Richmond were of two 0-6-0 switch engines working near the passenger station.

Sherbrooke again, then down to Island Pond

My next goal was to reach the Canadian National/Grand Trunk division point and yard at Island Pond, Vt. On the way down I got a shot of the local

passenger train returning to Richmond from its run down to Sherbrooke earlier in the morning. CN Pacific 5037 put on a good show with its two-car consist. I couldn't just drive through Sherbrooke without stopping, so I turned at the CN station. There I caught CN/GT's Montreal-Portland passenger train 16 with 4-6-2 No. 5289, which I encountered again later in the day at Island Pond. No. 16 was soon followed by manifest freight P490, also Portland-bound, behind burly Grand Trunk 2-8-2 No. 3702. I then ventured down to the CN engine facility and got several photos of an 0-6-0 and some Mikados. One of the hostlers, seeing my camera, came up to me with the information that a

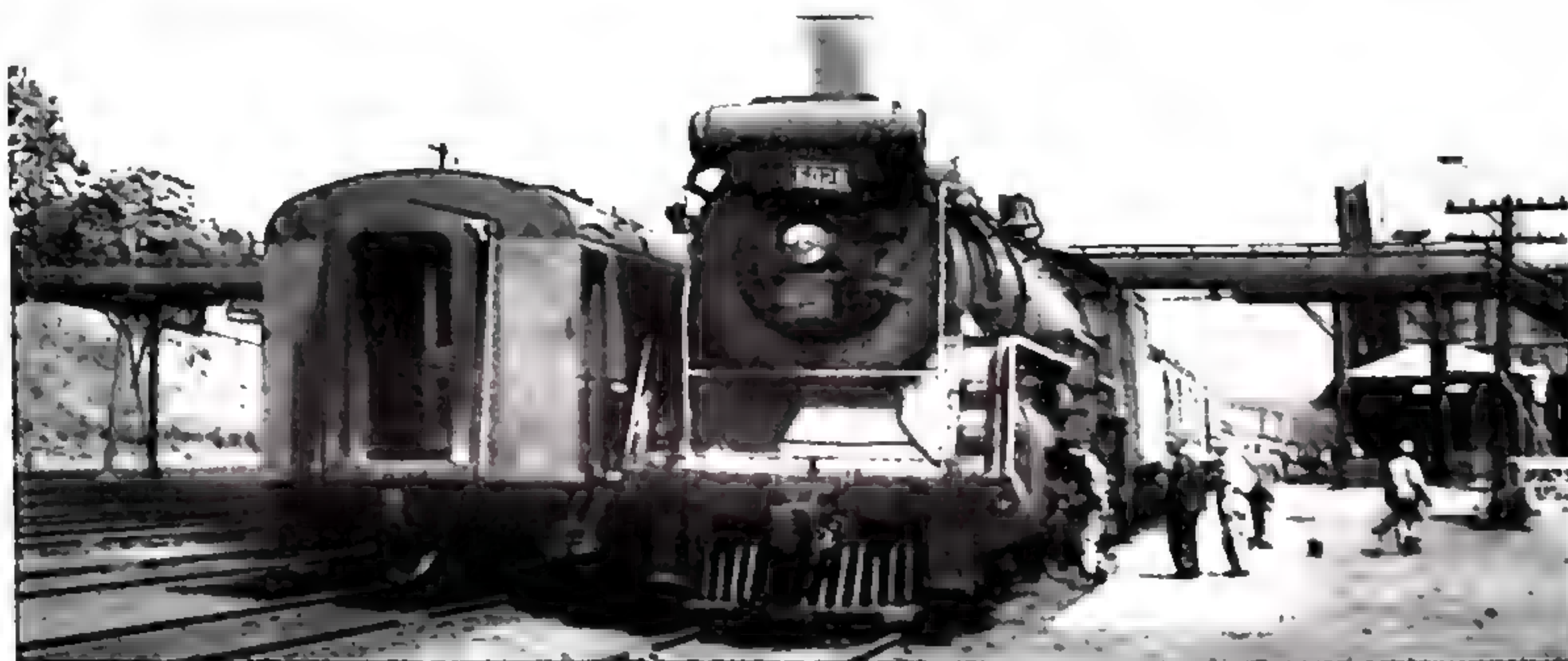
new freight diesel was due in shortly, and wouldn't I want to stay around to photograph it? I politely declined, as I had no desire to see my third diesel on this trip.

After crossing the border at Norton, Vt., I was soon in Island Pond, a tiny town located, naturally, on the shore of a pretty lake with an island in it! Grand Trunk had its major classification yard and locomotive shops here. In addition to being a crew-change point, Island Pond also housed offices of the U.S. Customs Service, in the beautiful stone railroad station. Ancient wooden bridges crossed over the widest part of the yard, one a footbridge at the passenger station, the other a vehicular bridge just east of it.

My arrival coincided with the scheduled 1:05 p.m. meet of passenger trains 16 and 17 that operated between Montreal and Portland. The meet not only allowed the usual handling of passengers and head-end traffic, but it also provided for a crew change. It was fascinating to watch as hostlers and mechanics descended on the locomotives of the two trains and serviced them right there at the station platform. CN 4-6-2 No. 5289 stayed on the point of Portland-bound 16, while No. 17 arrived on an adjacent track not behind a Pacific but rather a 4-8-2 Mountain type, CN 6029. I also grabbed a few shots of GT 0-6-0 No. 7530 switching cuts of cars in the nearby freight yard.



All good things must come to an end, and it was time for me to head south to my home in New Hampshire. It had been a busy two days of steam-train activity in the Eastern Townships of Quebec and at Island Pond in the northeast corner of Vermont. It was a wonderful opportunity to witness and photograph railroading at a time when diesels were on the verge of ending steam's reign. I managed to photograph 24 different locomotives under steam, as well as 6 out-of-service steam engines. And, oh yes, there were those two diesels, both of which turned out to be relatively rare. The happy memories of steam encounters made nearly 55 years ago remain with me today. ■



The meeting of CN trains 16 and 17 at Island Pond, Vt., concluded Smith's two days of steam. At the top, Pacific 5289 arrives with Montreal-Portland 16; as the 5289 is serviced (middle), Mountain type 6029 waits its turn to pull in with 17 and get some attention itself (above).



Dashing Dan's stationmaster

Reflections on a 28-year career at the two busiest stations on the Long Island Rail Road

By Joe Shearer, as told to James E. Valle

New York City is the scene of the most intense commuter railroading in the United States. Every weekday, hundreds of commuter trains converge on its terminals from New Jersey, Connecticut, and Long Island. Thousands of men and women work long hours on the railroad to expedite this flood of hu-

manity. Of all the carriers involved, none has been more single-mindedly devoted to commuter traffic than the Long Island Rail Road, historically the only Class 1 carrier to derive more revenue from passenger service than from freight haulage. From its beginnings as a corporate entity, the LIRR has operated a complex network of urban main

lines, extensive passenger terminals, and vast servicing facilities within the confines of a densely built-up city and its nearby suburbs. This circumstance gave rise to a unique railroading culture in which Joe Shearer participated for 28 years, starting in 1950.

A native of Brooklyn, Joe found himself, as a young man in his 20's with a



Main photo, Long Island Rail Road; inset, Don Wood

wife plus children on the way, in need of a steady job. Since his mother already worked for the Long Island as a clerk-typist, she was able to secure him a position as a baggageman. In reality, there is not a lot of baggage to handle on a commuter railroad, although some could be found on trains bound for resort points on the eastern end of the island like the Hamptons, Montauk, or Greenport. What really needed carting was vast quantities of pouched mail and parcel post consignments that were mainly handled after the evening commute rush was over, particularly between midnight and daybreak.

An employee who did well on this job could expect successive promotions to station usher, train announcer, assistant stationmaster, and finally stationmaster. Work assignments were allocated by means of an extra board and seniority. Station personnel had their own extra board and seniority list separate from other departments. Men based in Brooklyn were routinely sent anywhere within the New York city limits, but found themselves most frequent-



William D. Middleton

Jamaica, 11.3 miles from Penn Station, was—and still is—LIRR's hub. In a westward view (left) from the 1940's, steam and M.U. trains mingle at the high-level platforms; in 1970 (above), MP54's pull in from the west. Commuter "Dashing Dan" (inset) was an LIRR symbol.

ly assigned to Flatbush Avenue, Jamaica, and LIRR's side of Pennsylvania Station in Manhattan (the commuter carrier was a subsidiary of the Pennsylvania Railroad 1900-1966). With parking scarce or nonexistent at these workplaces, most station employees lived within walking distance of a station and rode the train to work. They were not required to know the rules governing train operations, but everyone above the rank of baggageman was expected to have memorized the schedule and routing of every train that passed through his assigned station. At a place like Jamaica—LIRR's hub, where nearly all lines converged—this could run to literally hundreds of trains, plus an entirely different lineup on weekends.

Ironically, 1950—the year Joe started on the Long Island—was something of a low point in the railroad's fortunes. After years of perfect safety records, LIRR suffered two major accidents in quick succession, both involving multiple-unit electric trains. The first was on February 17 at Rockville Centre,

21 miles from Penn Station. This was double-track territory, but a line-improvement project had necessitated the installation of a temporary, 2-mile-long gantlet track (where rails of two tracks overlapped) protected in each direction by distant and home signals. The rule was that the train that first entered the signal block tripped the opposing signals. Any train coming the other way was required to stop and wait on the double track until the first train cleared the gantlet. One complicating variable was that the signals could be manually overridden by the Rockville Centre operator in order to assign movement priority if two trains approached the gantlet simultaneously.

On the fateful night, Rockville Centre operator Charles Zablocki noticed westbound train 175 and eastbound 192 were each approaching their distant signals. He chose to give priority to train 175 and set the signals against 192. Engineer Joseph Kiefer on 192 somehow managed to ignore both the distant and home signals (which were set at "approach" and "stop," respectively), his



J. B. Reschke

Heavy snow caused trouble for LIRR's diesels and third-rail electrics, but steam locomotives carried on. After a postwar-era blizzard, G5s Ten-Wheeler No. 36 blasts by idled M.U. cars.



William D. Middleton

Stationmasters frequently called the Movement Bureau, known as "204" for its phone extension. Second-trick Chief Movement Director Harry B. Campbell Jr. is at work in August 1956.

cab signals, and a warning buzzer. His train crashed into No. 175 just beyond the west end of the gantlet. Thirty-one passengers on both trains were killed, but because of the oblique impact that resulted from colliding on a gantlet, both engineers survived. Kiefer later testified that he had seen the signals but "blacked out" because of high blood pressure before he could act on them.

An even worse wreck took place on November 22 just east of the Kew Gar-

dens station, 1.6 miles west of Jamaica. Train 780, running from Penn Station to Hempstead via Jamaica, encountered two cautionary signals and came to a stop. When the signals cleared, the motorman was not able to fully release his brakes, so the train remained stationary about 3,500 feet beyond the last protecting signal, which now showed a "stop-and-proceed" aspect. The rear brakeman on 780 carried a red lantern just a few feet back along the tracks but

returned to his train when he thought he heard the motors power up for a move. He was standing in the rear vestibule when he saw another train approaching at high speed. He gave a frantic "washout" signal, but it was ignored, and train 174, with motorman Benjamin Pokorney at the controls, smashed into the rear of 780.

Seventy-seven passengers and engineer Pokorney perished in this rear-end collision; 352 others suffered injuries. It was the LIRR's deadliest wreck and one of the worst in American railroad history. The investigation revealed that Pokorney had initially complied with the stop-and-proceed signal, but greatly exceeded the 15-mph limit he was supposed to observe. That speed was intended to enable him to stop short of any obstruction or subsequent signal he might encounter. Since Pokorney did not survive the wreck, the reason for his rule violation could never be established. Evening darkness may have been a contributing factor.

As a newly hired baggageman, Joe didn't make it his business to learn the details of these accidents, but he and his fellow station employees quickly felt the ire of the commuting public in the form of sarcastic comments and stinging criticism of the railroad and its employees. As time went on, he was to learn that he and his colleagues would frequently bear the brunt of the public's displeasure whenever trains were late or service was disrupted. They, of course, had no control over situations caused by bad weather, equipment failures, signal malfunctions, or other operating problems, but they were the only employees the public had access to, and so they took the heat. Joe was by nature a hot-headed young Irishman, so learning to deal with surly passengers was difficult for him. It was by far the most unpleasant aspect of his time on the railroad.

As he settled into his job, Joe became aware of the daily cycle of operations in a busy hub like Jamaica. The day started just after dawn when the morning commuter rush began. Steam- or diesel-powered trains from points east on the island converged on Jamaica and disgorged passengers who transferred to M.U. electrics to complete their journeys into the city. This went on with streetcar-like intensity until about 10 a.m. Starting about noon, more trains arrived, mostly carrying shoppers and matinee theatergoers. After this traffic, another lull developed until the early commuters began passing through heading back to the suburbs. The evening rush contin-

ued in full force until about 7 p.m., to be followed by a return flow of passengers headed to town for dinner and an evening of entertainment. These patrons would be on their way back home a few hours later, and the last passenger runs came through around midnight.

Now the third shift, or "trick," of station workers arrived, and with the facility empty of "civilians," the work of shifting tons of parcel post and pouched mail from Railway Post Office and baggage cars delivered by the New Haven and the Pennsylvania railroads began. All during the third trick, cars were switched and spotted for loading and unloading along high-level platforms usually thronged with passengers during the day. Freight trains rumbled through, shuttling goods between Holban Yard, just east of Jamaica, and various destinations in Brooklyn and Queens such as Bay Ridge and Long Island City. Nearby was a giant freight-house for the handling of less-than-carload-lots, which was also a busy place at night. Because the freight-house crews were separate from the station personnel, Joe never ventured there, but switch engines picking up and setting out freight cars prowled through the station all night long. Toward dawn there was a slack period after mail and parcels had been distributed and before the next day's early commuters began to appear.

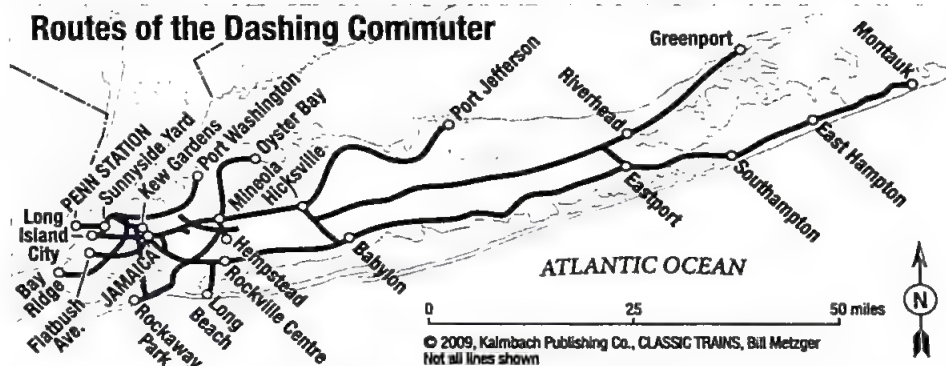
This flow of people, pouches, and parcels went on year 'round, punctuated only by the changing seasons. Joe preferred the warm-weather months because the railroad ran more smoothly then. Human traffic peaked at that time of year, when normal commuting activity was supplemented by heavy weekend traffic bound for beaches at the Rockaways and other South Shore destinations. Special movements served three large racetracks—Belmont, Aqueduct, and Jamaica—while express trains ran fully booked out to Montauk, the Hamptons, and other posh destinations. The ushers and train announcers were obliged to add these seasonal specials to their memorized repertoire of regular trains. This traffic held up until the early 1970's, when the LIRR began to lose out to the highway system and the municipal subway trains.

Winter brought severe challenges. With the cold weather came ice and snow, which disrupted the electric grid, crippled trains, froze track switches, and clogged cuts with drifts. In really bad storms, trains were marooned in the yards. Late arrivals and departures multiplied, while the public continued to pour into the terminals, milling



W. E. Mosher

The Long Island favored Alco and Fairbanks-Morse in its early diesel orders. Alco S2 459, Alco RS1 463, and FM H15-44 1509 stand at the Morris Park engine terminal in 1963.

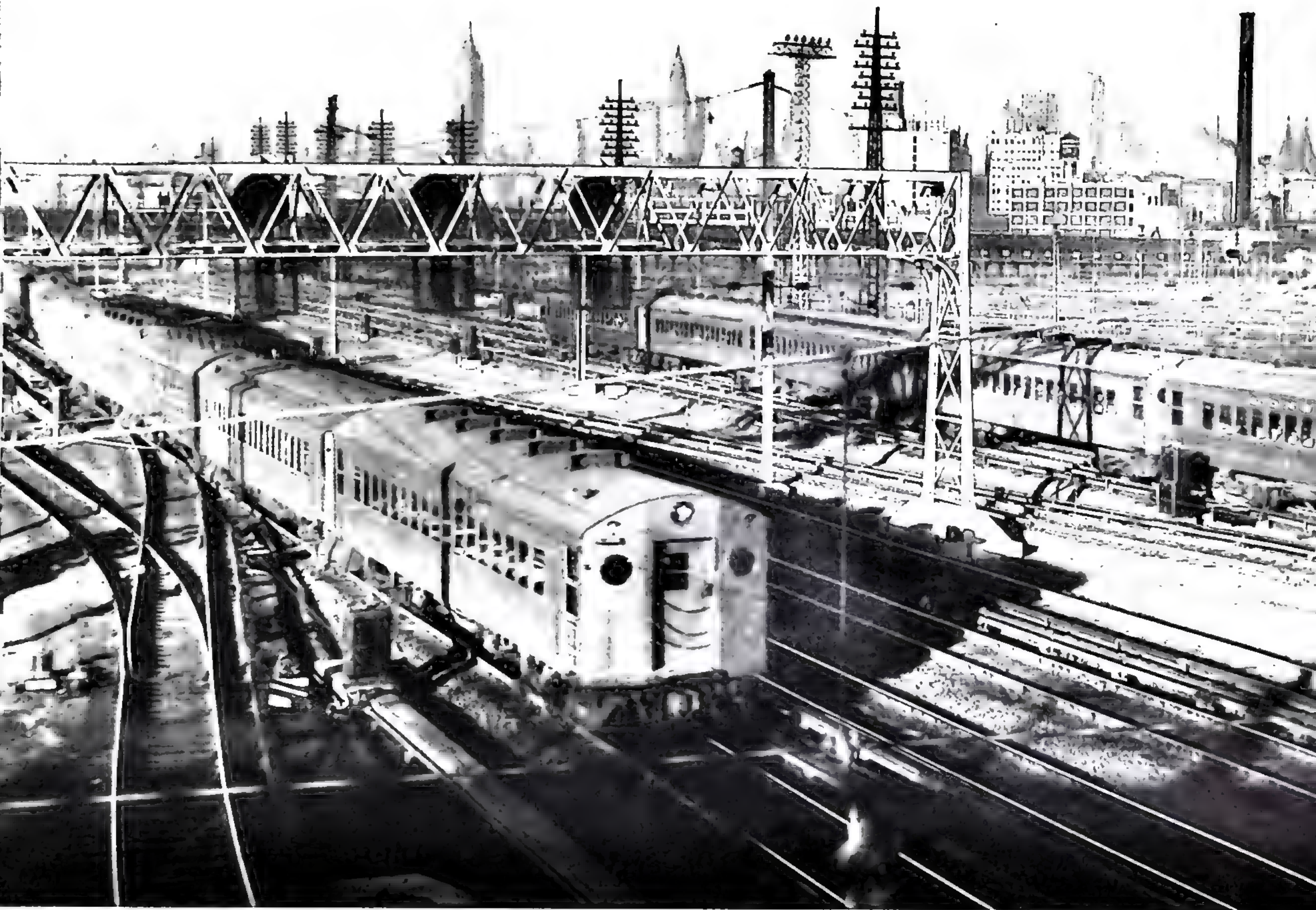


around and demanding to know the whereabouts of trains that often never came. Frustrated New Yorkers could get really ugly under these circumstances, contributing to the overall confusion and making for a long workday. Under these circumstances, Joe and his colleagues saw the third trick, usually shunned by railroaders, as the most desirable time to work.

Winter brought out another aspect of Gotham railroading. Joe hired out when the Long Island was beginning to retire its steam locomotives. While the electrics remained in place, there was a transition period to diesels until 1955, when steam operation ended. Not being in train service, Joe never bothered to master the different classes of steam, diesel, and electric power on the road, but he did know about their reputations in general terms. Electrics were the

most prone to malfunction when the weather turned nasty. Blowing snow penetrated ventilator louvers and shorted out motors. The electric third rails iced up, and motors didn't have enough power to plow through deep snowdrifts. Diesels weren't a lot better when the going got rough. Although self-contained, they were mechanically complex and prone to breakdowns on the road. They were also liable to be defeated by heavy snow. Some attributed these problems to the LIRR's purchase of Alco and Fairbanks-Morse diesels instead of more-reliable EMD's.

The steam engines were another matter. Simple, robust, and reliable, they could bull their way through just about anything. By the time Joe hired out, most of the heavier engines, the K4s Pacifics and L1s Mikados, had already gone back to parent PRR, but there



Long Island Rail Road

With the Manhattan skyline in the background, Long Island M.U. trains pass the Pennsylvania's vast Sunnyside coachyard in the 1940's.

were still some G5s Ten-Wheelers and H10s Consolidations stabled just west of Jamaica at Morris Park. Joe regarded them as somehow more "real" than other types of motive power; many engineers felt the same way, and some actually waited for the end of steam to put in for retirement. Joe remembers one runner who regularly got down from his cab to make sure his train was properly loaded and the vestibules secured before leaving the station. When steam was finally gone, a lot of the excitement went out of station work, and winters became more hectic than ever.

There was one place steam never ventured and even diesels were scarce—Penn Station, New York. As he gained seniority and experience, Joe drew duty at Penn, the ultimate western terminus of the LIRR. Al-

though some of the operating personnel were qualified to handle trains over part of PRR's New York Division, station crews observed a line of demarcation. It was understood that the Pennsy ran the west side of the vast complex while the Long Island men owned the east side. The only exceptions were the leads running to Sunnyside Yard and the New Haven connection to Hell Gate Bridge and Connecticut.

Work at Penn Station followed pretty much the same routines as prevailed at Jamaica. Passenger business dominated the first and second tricks, with baggage- and mail-handling reserved for the wee hours of the third trick. Joe preferred the midnight-to-dawn hours while he was handling baggage, but later, when he was promoted to assistant stationmaster and stationmaster, he liked second trick. First trick was never very popular because during the daytime all the "brass hats" were in their offices and, consequently, work rules were in full force. Once the bosses went home

for the night, things could relax a bit. Flasks came out to provide a little warmth in the dank chill of the cavernous underground platforms. Card games passed the time when things were slow, and when there was a rush on, everyone pitched in without much regard to jurisdictional boundaries.

In these more casual shifts, it was even possible to do favors. Joe had been able to help some of his wife's relatives get jobs on the railroad. While working second trick at Penn as stationmaster, he would encourage his brother-in-law, an engineer, to bid on the last Long Island passenger run of the day to arrive there. This train came in just before midnight, and then its equipment dead-headed back to Morris Park. The engineer thus got another whole day's pay for just 11.3 miles, while the second-trick crew used the movement to ride back to Jamaica. As the train cleared the station, out came the trusty deck of cards and the men relaxed while the otherwise empty cars rumbled across

More on our Web site

See video clips of Long Island Rail Road trains at Jamaica at www.ClassicTrainsMag.com

the sleeping Borough of Queens.

Promotion to assistant stationmaster and stationmaster involved considerable additional responsibility. Perhaps the most demanding was supervising the flow of trains through the station. As each scheduled train or one of the many extras came due, it was the stationmaster's job to assign it a platform for arrival and departure. This was a fairly routine activity, but it required coordination with the men in the interlocking towers that controlled the station throats. At Jamaica there were two such towers, Jay at the west end and Hall on the east. Sometimes an expected train didn't make it out of the yard, resulting in delays and the need to juggle platform assignments for following movements. To facilitate his job, the stationmaster controlled signals at each end of his platforms. These displayed only two indications, "stop" and "go." From a booth overlooking the platforms, the stationmaster or his assistant watched for the conductor's highball, and upon confirming the train was ready to depart, changed the platform signal and "dispatched" the train out of the station.

This was not, however, train dispatching in the usual sense of the word. The stationmaster's signal only authorized the train to proceed as far as the tower that stood just beyond the station complex. Here the train was taken over by the Movement Bureau to be routed and admitted to the main line. A train moving across the city on densely traveled corridors thus passed from the jurisdiction of station personnel to the control of the Movement Bureau and back again several times in the course of a run. It was an unusual system of train control, but ideally suited for the traffic patterns and densities on the Long Island. Once out beyond the dense commuter zone, the trains were run in a more orthodox fashion.

As a stationmaster, Joe worked both Jamaica and the LIRR's side of Penn Station, but he found Jamaica to be more challenging. Penn Station was a stub terminal for his purposes. Trains just came in from the east and then retraced their path back out. In contrast, Jamaica was a hub, with trains arriving and departing from several directions. To keep things moving smoothly required close coordination with the Movement Bureau. To facilitate this, the Long Island had a dedicated telephone system with each major department reachable by dialing a three-digit extension. The Movement Bureau's extension was 204, and Joe was constantly in touch with the people there,



Pennsylvania Railroad: A. F. Sozio



William D. Middleton

The LIRR concourse at Penn Station (top, in the 1940's) was a functional affair; down at platform level, ubiquitous MP54's occupy one of the seven tracks devoted to the commuter road.

so much so that he and his colleagues usually referred to them simply as "204" and seldom called them by their proper name. Although 204 was nominally supreme in the area of train movements, the stationmasters did have the prerogative of holding trains in the station past their scheduled departure times if it was necessary to allow passengers on delayed runs to make connections. Otherwise it was a stationmaster's duty to get the trains out of his platforms on time. Sometimes this was just not possible, and then the stationmaster had to nerve himself to ignore platform patrons shaking their fists or making rude gestures at the glass both.

Twenty-six years of this kind of pressure finally got Joe thinking about the pleasures of consistently working the day shift and ultimately about retirement. By reverting back to the lesser

position of train announcer, he could shed some responsibility and secure a much more favorable position on the seniority roster, and that is how he spent his last two years on the railroad, retiring in 1978.

During his time in service he actually witnessed very little change in the way the Long Island Rail Road's stations were managed, other than the end of steam operation. Change was in the wind, however, and things are more streamlined now. Mail is no longer handled. Jobs have been eliminated and stations have been reconfigured. Joe senses that passenger service is better than it was, but he no longer feels like he knows his way around the plant, and most of his cronies have followed him into retirement, leaving others to cope with the one element that has never changed: the demanding public. ■



One day at . . . Brookfield, Ill.

By Ed DeRouin • Photos by the author

The year was 1965, and spring had finally arrived. After a long winter, I was ready to get back out trackside. My first years of railroad exploration had been of Chicago's downtown trackage and passenger stations; I got around on rapid transit and commuter trains. This Saturday in May would be the same, but the territory was new for me. While I had ridden the Chicago, Burlington & Quincy main line to Aurora several times ["Unexpected Fan-Trip Adventure," Fall 2008], I needed a closer look.

The skies had not yet cleared when I boarded a southbound CTA train at Howard Street, at the Chicago-Evanston border. A change at Belmont to a Ravenswood train allowed me to detrain at the Loop "L" station at Quincy and Wells, which shortened my walk to Union Station by four blocks. I purchased a round-trip ticket on the Burlington to Riverside, 11 miles out, and boarded train 203, to depart at 9:55 a.m.; at this time, suburban trains operated on about a 90-minute headway. Twenty minutes after departure, I was standing on the Riverside platform under a brightening sky.

My hand-me-down camera, no lon-

ger of interest to my dad, was a fixed-focal length, manual 35mm of German make with the name VIRGIN pressed on the body. Its fastest shutter speed was 1/250 second. As I viewed the mix of rapidly changing clouds, I consulted my exposure guide. I didn't own a light meter, so my photography was a function of my interpretation of lighting conditions and the light-vs.-*f*-stop relationship found in the table Kodak printed on the inside of the film box. In those days, I was shooting Kodachrome 64.

Riverside was an interesting place, but I was worried that it was a poor location for shooting eastbound trains later in the afternoon. Owing to an elevation to the west, the trains would descend without much warning. Not seeing any headlights and certain my trek would be fast, I decided to walk west. Although walking the tracks would be quicker, I took the safer course and used surface streets, as fast trains and two bridges do not mix—just west of Riverside, the railroad crosses the Des Plaines River and above First Avenue.

I quickly was reminded of my logistical error. East of Riverside, streets closely paralleled the CB&Q right of way, but to the west they took a mean-



After detraining at Riverside and missing two trains by taking a circuitous route west, my first good photo was of outbound "dinky" 209, leaving Brookfield behind E8 9974.



A local freight approached from the east on track 1, but the inbound combined *Empire Builder* and *North Coast Limited*, due into Chicago at 1:40, was coming faster from the west behind four E units on track 2, and the *North Coast's* observation lounge just cleared the local's Chinese-red GP7. Visible to the west is a Brookfield municipal water tower, at Maple Avenue, and home signals for the Congress Park interlocking, near the Indiana Harbor Belt underpass.



My first shots of both a Burlington GP20 and GP30 came in one frame, of 919 and 959 leading a westbound freight (top). Carrying the markers (above) is one of the 65 stylish, sloped-cupola, aluminum-painted cabooses ("waycars" to CB&Q men) built by the Q's Havelock (Nebr.) Shops in 1954 (35) and '60 (30), in series 13525-13589. The eastbound freight whose headlight is visible in the photo above was setting out for the IHB interchange, and by the by, it headed east for Cicero Yard behind three of the Q's 36, four-year-old GP20's. (Burlington's GP30 ranks totaled 38, 30 from 1962 and 8 from '63.)





dering course, not rejoining the tracks again until Hollywood, the next station 0.73 rail-miles west, located in eastern Brookfield near the famed Brookfield Zoo. During my longer-than-expected hike, train 11, the combined *Nebraska Zephyr* and *Kansas City Zephyr* (out of Chicago at 11 a.m.) and train 97, Q's hot Twin Cities-bound freight, roared by westward.

At Hollywood, the skies darkened a bit. My shot of the westbound *North Coast Limited* (out of Chicago at 12:30) was disappointing, as my estimation of the lighting and the rapidly shifting clouds converged at the wrong moment. This location presented a similar problem as Riverside, as westbound trains would descend on short notice. So with no train in sight, I bought lunch at the nearby Cock Robin and then walked a half-mile west to the Brookfield station, anticipating the afternoon parade of intercity passenger trains.

The Burlington delivered.

In the next 2 hours, 20 minutes, I photographed 10 trains. The first, on film frame No. 15, was "dinky" 209, led by E8 9974, making its 1:30 p.m. stop at

Brookfield. I ventured a block west of the station and caught the eastbound combined *Empire Builder* and *North Coast Limited* as a westbound local freight passed behind a Chinese-red GP7. While multiple tracks and trains posed issues of composition, the sky stabilized and, following the table printed inside the film box, I confidently set the *f*-stop.

Next came a westbound freight led by a GP20 and a GP30, models I hadn't photographed before. I then noticed, off to the west, an eastbound freight on Track 3, the southernmost main. As its headlight got closer, and then moved away, I realized the train was setting out cars on the Indiana Harbor Belt interchange track at Congress Park, the next station to the west.

As an 18-year old with varied interests, I began to formulate my return into the city—I did not want to be late for my date that evening. At 2:10 p.m., E8 9976 led eastbound dinky 220 into Brookfield, but I decided to wait for the next one. It was a good decision, because shortly after 220 departed, train 22, the *Morning Zephyr* from the Twin



At 2:10 p.m., E8 9976 approaches Brookfield with "dinky" 220, but I decided to ride the next one. This turned out to be a wise choice, since I would've missed the photos on the next two pages. Some of these bilevels still work for Metra, but today, midday trains have at least six cars.



Was I glad I stayed at trackside? You bet! For, soon after dinky 220 left on Track 3, the inbound *Morning Twin Zephyr*, due into Chicago at 2:40, flashed by on Track 2, trailing dome-observation-parlor-lounge *Silver Terrace* or *Tower*, Budd-built in 1952 for the *Kansas City Zephyr*.



I was back on the Brookfield platform when the inbound *California Zephyr*, due into Union Station at 2:05 p.m., rolled by with 12 cars in the charge of two E7's, its customary three dome coaches and a dome dormitory-buffet-lounge ahead of the diner, four sleeping cars, and the obs.

Cities, flew eastward trailing a blunt-end observation parlor-lounge purchased for the *Kansas City Zephyr*. Right behind it was train 18, the *California Zephyr*, running a bit late behind two E7's. Next was the westbound combined *Empire Builder/Afternoon Twin Zephyr* behind four E8's and/or E9's, blowing through Brookfield within a dozen min-

utes of getting the highball out of Union Station. Last, for me, was the outbound *California Zephyr*, behind E8's 9942B and 9967, scheduled out of Chicago at 3:10 and on-time through Brookfield.

I had an uneventful wait for my ride east, train 224, which I boarded at 3:51. At 4:20 I was out of Union Station, headed for the CTA, home, a quick clean-up,

and my date. While I learned something about the Burlington this day, more education would come a week later when, upon reviewing my slides, I learned more about the relationship between shutter speed and *f*-stops. In the future, whenever conditions allowed, I would set the shutter at 1/250 and halve the *f*-stop. ■



With almost too many domes to count, the outbound combined *Empire Builder/Afternoon Twin Zephyr* (top) was next, crossing Salt Creek behind four E's. By now, I was almost out of film, and my next photo (above, of the outbound *California Zephyr*) was the last of my outing.



Boston's South Station

The Boston Terminal Co.—jointly owned by the New Haven Railroad (75 percent) and New York Central subsidiary Boston & Albany (25 percent)—built South Station during 1896–98. Initially, the terminal's 28 tracks were covered by a 602x570-foot trainshed, which was replaced in 1930 with individual platform canopies. Nearly

demolished in the 1970's, today's restored South Station hosts Amtrak's electrified Northeast Corridor service and Massachusetts Bay Transportation Authority (MBTA, or "the T") commuter trains. Hidden behind the NH drawbridges are the parallel NH and B&A main lines heading for Back Bay Station where they diverge respectively

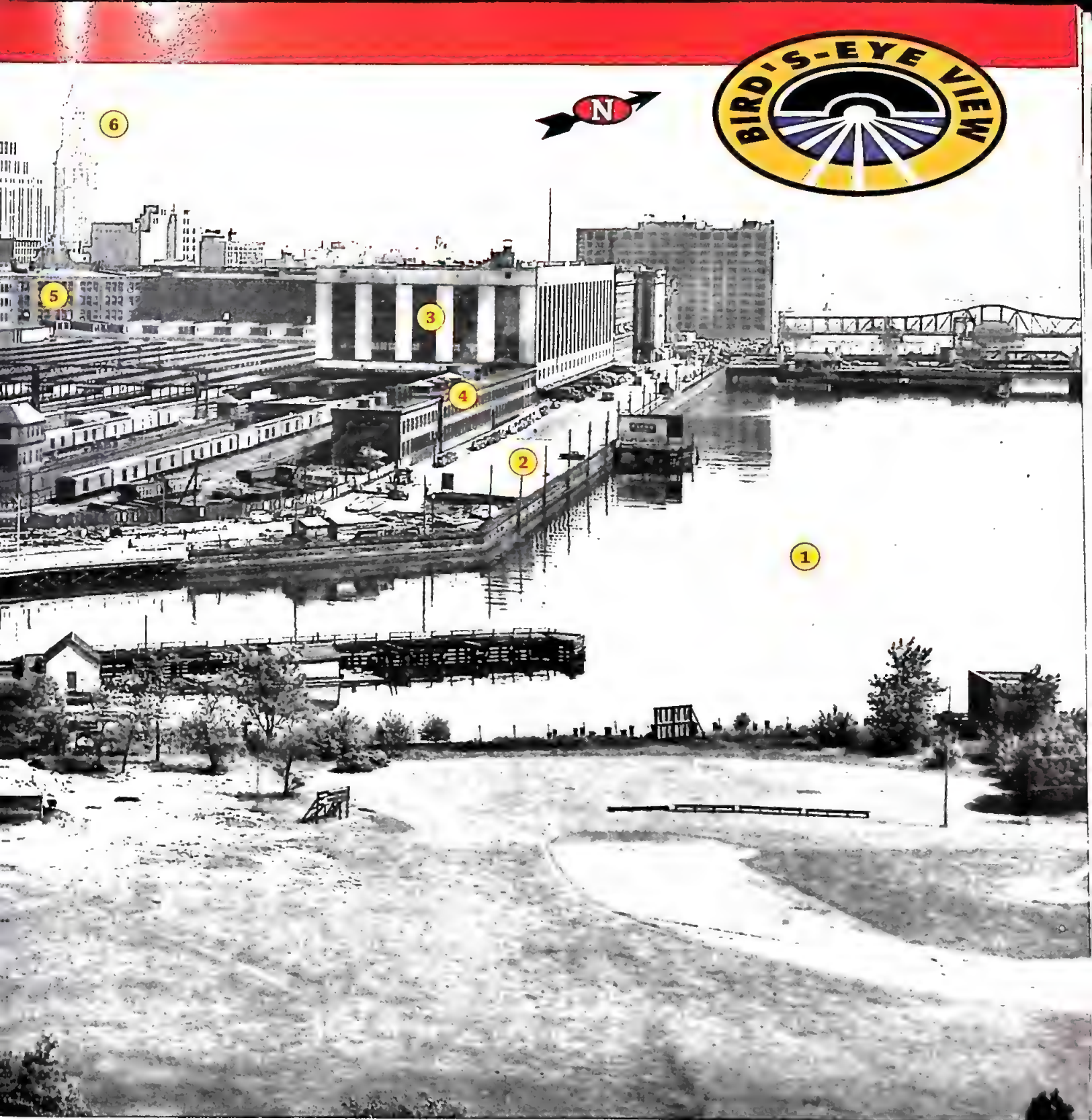


Photo: New York Central. Research: Carl R. Byron

to New York City and Albany. Only two locomotives are visible, both NH Alco "high-hood" switchers: a solid green one by the REA building, and a green-and-orange one to the right of Signal Tower No. 1. The photo was taken near midday in the mid-1940's from an upper floor or the roof of the Domino Sugar Refinery, razed in the 1950's.

- 1 Fort Point Channel
- 2 Dorchester Avenue
- 3 U.S. Post Office building (1934)
- 4 Station power plant and support facilities
- 5 Station head house
- 6 U.S. Custom House (city's tallest building, 1915-49)
- 7 Signal Tower No. 1

- 8 Railway Express Agency building
- 9 Boston Edison Illuminating Co. plant
- 10 NH Midland Division bascule drawbridges
- 11 B&A freighthouse No. 4 (site of Old Colony Railroad passenger station before 1899)
- 12 B&A freighthouse No. 1
- 13 Sliding-type street bridge (left half in open position during construction work)

Trainmaster troubles



EMD GP9's were B&O's standard power at Cowen, W.Va., during author Meeker's stint as trainmaster there in 1961. Five years before, four of them idled at Connellsville, Pa.

Jim Shaughnessy

Exiled to a remote West Virginia outpost, a B&O man discovered that things were not what they seemed

By Harold E. Meeker

Chester T. Williams, Baltimore & Ohio's general manager at Pittsburgh, Pa., banished me from my assistant trainmaster position at Akron, Ohio, to be trainmaster at remote Cowen, W.Va., in 1961. Although technically a promotion, I felt it was punishment for the debacle in which our top train was delayed for three hours on my watch ["The Night

the *Capitol Limited* Almost Froze Up," Summer 2007 CLASSIC TRAINS]. My wife and three children stayed behind in Akron, because the boss told me to be there the next day! My family would join me in a few weeks.

Cowen was the major B&O collection yard for eastbound West Virginia metallurgical coal shipped to foreign markets. There were seven locals a day

going out and gathering loads and bringing them back to Cowen. There we would consolidate the cars into two, sometimes three, heavy trains north to the West End main line at Grafton. This was the daily pattern, with only cleanup chores on the weekends.

I soon realized why Mr. Williams had sent me to this godforsaken outpost. The locals were called twice a day,

and their locomotives each were shared by two jobs. The idea was to have all jobs get back in 11 hours, turn the locomotives in an hour, and get them on the next job. In practice, the jobs gradually slipped to 12 or 13 hours, and we wound up paying for two crews for the first few hours of every turn.

Mr. Williams wanted me to bust up this make-work situation. That first week, I met with the crews and told them what we needed to do. We would run these trains on reasonable schedules. I told them to bring in whatever loads they could—just be back within 11 hours from your call time.

You can imagine the moaning and wailing I heard, because this wasn't the way they'd "always done it." No more. I had talked to the mine operators and warned them that we might have disruptions, but to bear with me, that eventually they all would like the new, predictable service.

After a few days, the wailing ended and the plan began to work exactly as I had hoped. It was like most of the men knew the old way was wrong and, realizing they'd been caught, decided to get with the program. A few quietly told me this should've been done years ago, and a few wives said, not so secretly, that they liked the predictability of their husbands' comings and goings.

We reduced overtime drastically, and the crews' usual time on duty dropped to 12 hours a day from 14 or even 16. Of greater importance, the railroad ran smoothly. I stressed that we would try to do the same things at the same time every day.

We made changes in our yard work to reduce the inventory of empty cars. The single most significant item was not even new. My chief clerk, Harold Carpenter (later a trainmaster himself), told me they used to have arriving road trains of empties stay on the main instead of going into the yard, whereupon a local crew would take over the train. This required leaving the yard crew's caboose on the main just south of where the train from Grafton normally stopped. The yard crew would get on the road engines, couple to their own caboose, and, with it on the point, proceed south to distribute cuts of empties. We reinstituted that system, and it worked well.

Things were going so smoothly at Cowen that I had time to be a supervisor instead of a "super chief clerk." About six months went by on what had become a routine operation. Power problems were rare, thanks in large part to our general locomotive foreman, Hugh Livengood, who was a



Harold E. Meeker

Sporting traditional railroad attire, a Cowen yard crew poses before a GP9 for the new trainmaster to snap their picture. The men are (from left) brakeman Herman Perrine, extra fireman Doyle Wamsley, engineer Burl Mick, conductor Guy Bush, and brakeman Roy Tyler.

smart, positive, and very nice guy.

Then one day, the revived practice resulted in tragedy. Train 41 from Grafton, with about 150 empties, was due at Cowen about 4 p.m. Since we were overloaded with empties, we decided to utilize the old procedure. This also was an opportunity to show a trainee on hand how our maneuver worked.

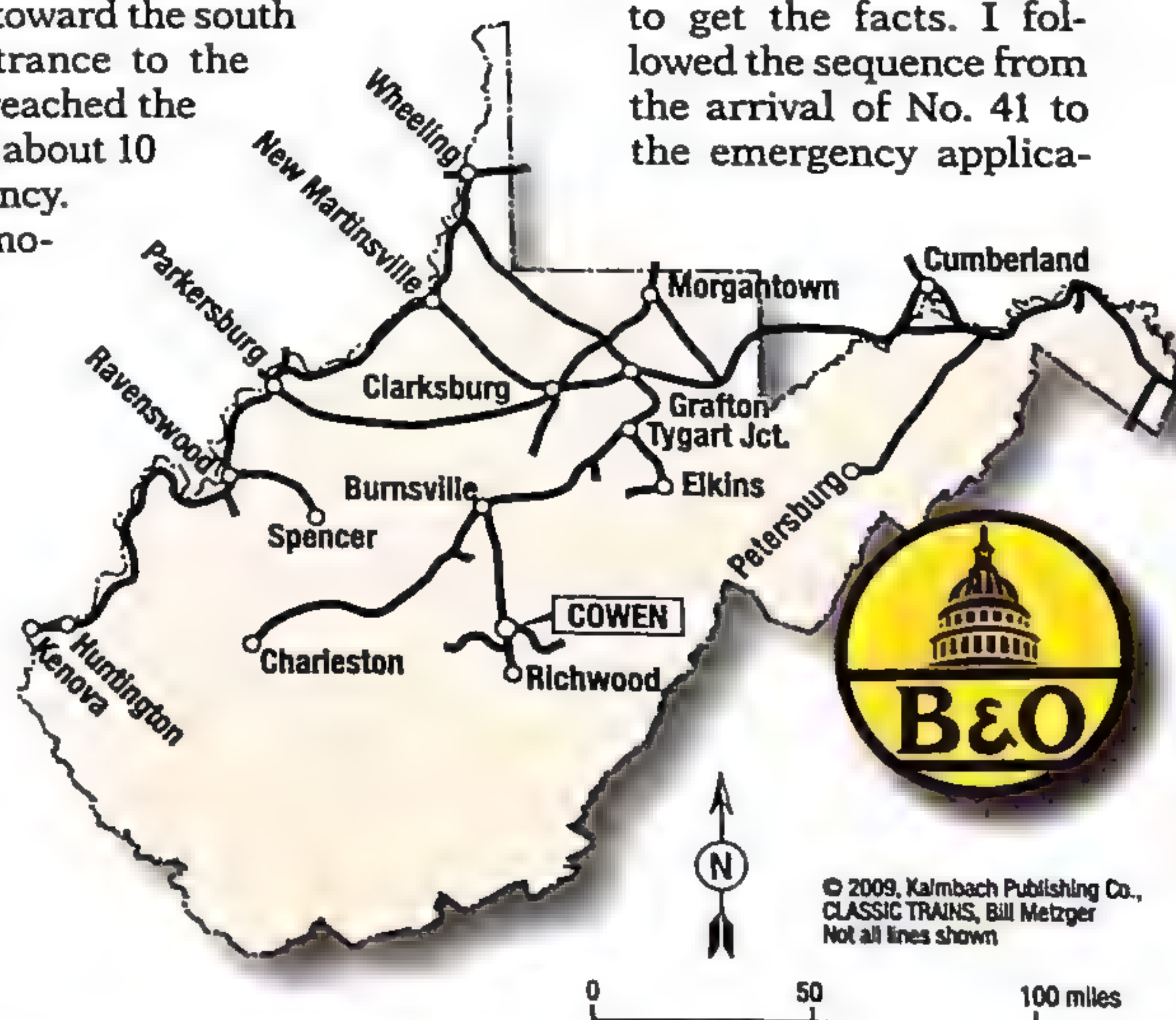
He and I were driving to the point where 41 was expected to stop. The yard caboose was on the main; No. 41 had arrived; and the yard crew had replaced the road crew on board. The engines coupled to the yard caboose, and the entire train—yard caboose first, but with the rear-end road crew still on their caboose—moved toward the south ladder switch and entrance to the yard. Just before they reached the switch, the train, going about 10 mph, went into emergency.

I rushed to the locomotives, where the yard-job engineer told me I better get to the road caboose on the rear end, because the emergency-braking application produced a tremendous slack impact. That I did, and I found a shocking sight: The road conductor and brakeman, who would've been on or near the back platform when the brakes went on,

were nowhere to be seen.

On entering the caboose, I saw devastation. Both men were smashed forward in a bloody mess. Immediately I drove to get my wife, who was a nurse, because Cowen had no emergency medical people. She told me the conductor was dead and the brakeman was close to death. An ambulance had been called. (The brakeman survived and returned to work, but he suffered from the effects of the accident all his life.)

The duty of a supervisor at such a scene is to investigate the incident. Although I may have been in somewhat of a trance because of the enormity of the events, it was left to me to get the facts. I followed the sequence from the arrival of No. 41 to the emergency applica-



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CLASSIC TRAINS, Bill Metzger
Not all lines shown



Two photos: E. L. Thompson; Baltimore & Ohio Railroad Historical Society collection

Two May 12, 1947, views of B&O facilities at Cowen show the enginehouse and north end of the yard (top) and the passenger depot (above).

tion of the brakes on the yard job. The switch at the south end of the yard was in reverse position for mainline movements. The yard conductor had been the last person to handle the switch, and he applied the brakes when he saw the switch was in the wrong position. The question became, why was a main-track switch left in reverse position and not locked, per Rule 104(B) in the General Code of Operating Rules?

It turned out that this switch "always" was left in a reverse position (and unlocked) so the loaded locals coming from the mines would not have to stop and realign it to enter the yard. Why didn't I know this? I suppose my lack of experience and emphasis on efficiency contributed to this situation. I sent the report to Baltimore.

The surfacing of a long-standing rules violation embarrassed the road's top of-

ficers, some of whom had been trainmasters at Cowen. The rules committee and labor-relations department wanted no part of the situation. I begged for help, but got little. The labor folks sent me an investigation manual and told me I could exclude any persons with no direct knowledge of the incident. In short, I had to handle everything myself.

Five union chiefs visited me at the yard office just before the investigation, and warned that they were prepared to tear into the company for ignoring a habitual violation. I told them that unless they had personal information about the events, they would be barred from the investigation. They all went home. The only help I got from our labor-relations department was that they told me I could bar the union brass on this basis.

In short, it was a low-key investiga-

tion, and the yard conductor was declared guilty (by me), but the penalty was minimal. It was over in two hours. The circumstances muddled the waters. I don't know if anyone did anything wrong except for me, for not enforcing the rule.

Now we all had to get back to work.

For me, life was grim for a while. I had no feedback from anywhere. I had to administer the place under the cloud of the investigation. I felt like an outsider in a tight-knit community. Shortly, I got the word from the chief dispatcher that Chester Williams' business car was coming in on No. 41. At first I was elated, thinking he would be happy that I had significantly reduced overtime and congestion.

When 41 arrived, I did not meet the train. I felt that if Mr. Williams wanted



In an eastward view of Cowen (pop. 500) from 1961, part of the B&O station is visible at left, with the tracks angling along the bottom of the picture. Today, the line here is run by CSX.

me to know he was coming, he would have called me. He made his way to the trainmaster's office. The place was full of engineers, conductors, and trainmen as he stormed in the door. What he said cannot be printed here, but he made it known that he thought I was to blame for the accident.

I was speechless. Somehow the next few hours passed until Mr. Williams left town on the next train. Certainly he left his mark. I spent the next couple of weeks trying to understand his reasoning, and ultimately came to the conclusion that he was right—I should have known about the switch situation.

Now I figured it would be impossible for me to run Cowen effectively. I thought virtually all the local employees would agree with Mr. Williams, and that my position was untenable. When I learned that a man named William J. Dixon was forming a new department in Baltimore, and I requested an audience with him. To make a long story short, suddenly I became an industrial engineer.

Back in Cowen, I prepared the family for the move to Baltimore. My wife was ecstatic, because she, like most of my predecessors' wives, had difficulty adjusting to life in that outpost. The relocation process took a few weeks, and during this period I was in somewhat of a trance, assuming that the employees resented me.

Then one day I received a letter from

Harlen "Wimpy" Perrine, a trainman who worked into and out of Cowen on the Grafton extra board (and could have been the ill-fated brakeman on 41, who came from the same board). It was the first indication that my reading of the mood in Cowen might not be entirely correct. I didn't know Perrine very well, but his letter really raised my morale. Basically, he said he understood what happened and wished me well in the future. He also complimented me on the way I was running Cowen.

Allow me to interject that Cowen was where I introduced my son, Ken, then about 4½, to railroading. I thought he might enjoy a train ride, so I put him in the hands of one of my closest associates, I. O. Miller, the senior conductor and politician on the division. During the ensuing months, Ken made many trips with I.O. and liked him a lot. In retrospect, this was an infusion of the railroad "bug," which led eventually to Ken's jobs of yard clerk and yardmaster on Western Pacific, then to dispatcher jobs on WP, Southern Pacific, and finally Union Pacific.

Shortly before we were to leave for Baltimore, I was asked attend a meeting at Cowen High School on a Friday night. My entire family was invited, and when we arrived, we were overwhelmed. Virtually the entire town was there (at least all the railroad people, numbering in the hundreds). The trains that night were abolished so the crews could be at

After the accident, and my boss's reaction to it, I figured it would be impossible for me to run Cowen.



Two photos, Harold E. Meeker

Author Meeker's son, Ken, age 4½, tries out the engineer's seat on a B&O GP9 at Cowen. Given the smile on his face, is it any wonder he followed his dad into a railroad career?

the meeting. It was a good-bye party for me, and tears came from my eyes when I realized this.

It was a well-planned event, with balloons and other decorations. At one point, when the place was momentarily quiet, a large man slipped in late at the back of the room. It was I. O. Miller. From the front, little Ken yelled for all to hear, "Hi, I.O.!" The place erupted in laughter and applause. It couldn't have been more appropriate. I.O. must have felt like the king he really was.

To make a wonderful night better, I was asked to withdraw my transfer to Baltimore, but I knew it was too late. Besides, I doubt Chester Williams would have allowed it. To this day, 48 years later and past my 79th birthday, I consider leaving Cowen the biggest mistake of my life. Regardless of my wife's joy over returning to her world, and the more lofty positions I would later hold, I still think the high point of my career was being trainmaster at Cowen. ■

My **SP** roundhouse days





A telegrapher learns about the hot, dirty, and heavy side of railroading at Bakersfield, Calif., in 1955

By R. David Read

The year was 1951, and I was a telegrapher. I learned the art of telegraphy from my dad, who was a telegrapher/wire chief for Canadian National Telegraph before his poor health forced our family to migrate from Canada to California; from my mother, who had worked as a telegrapher for the Michigan Central; and from my own days as a messenger kid, hanging around the relay office and depot in Nakina, Ontario. I hired out with Western Union while still a sophomore in high school. Western Union wasn't too fastidious about checking new employees' credentials—I told the office manager I was 17, and he believed me. When Western Union employees went on strike in 1951 and the company instituted a lock-out, I was out of work. With few other options for gainful employment, and facing a draft into the Army, I joined the Marine Corps and soon was on a ship bound for Korea.

Upon my return from Korea and subsequent discharge in spring 1955, I found that work for a telegrapher was in light demand, to the point where I strongly considered re-enlisting in the Marines. However, my soon-to-be bride was dead-set against that plan, so, newly married, in need of a job, and not too anxious to resume my connections with Western Union, I hired out as a machinist's helper in Southern Pacific's Bakersfield (Calif.) roundhouse. Over that long, scorching summer, I learned just how hot, dirty, and heavy the parts of a steam locomotive can be.

Steam was still supreme

The San Joaquin Division was one of the last strongholds of steam on the SP system. When I started, GS-class 4-8-4's still handled most of the passenger trains, including the premier *San Joaquin Daylight*. Much of the tonnage over the "Hill," as the 120-mile district from Bakersfield south to Mojave via Tehachapi Loop was known, was the province of 4100- and 4200-series cab-ahead 4-8-8-2's, with 2-10-2's as pushers. (Santa Fe had trackage rights over the Hill, but its engines did not use the SP roundhouse; they had their own.)

After VE Day in May 1945, and in anticipation of a long Pacific War, SP had acquired 10 ex-Boston & Maine 2-8-4 Berkshires. These, along with SP's huge fleet of 2-10-2's, polished the rails on the Valley Subdivision from Bakersfield north to Fresno. Consolidations, Mikados, and elderly Moguls still handled the branchline traffic, while yard chores were fulfilled by SP's extensive inventory of 0-6-0 switchers. And, just to keep things interesting, occasionally a narrow-gauge engine from SP's Owens Valley line would show up loaded on a flatcar and in need of overhaul. Another aberration was the periodic visit of one of the Trona Railway's brightly clad steam engines for maintenance.

Bakersfield's SP "Hill dispatcher" had responsibility for movement over the Bakersfield-Mojave line. This section did not receive centralized traffic control until after World War II. One can only imagine the dispatching nightmare that existed during the war, when this was a helper-heavy, single-track, short-siding, train-order-dispatched stretch of railroad hosting two big-time Class 1 carriers. During those pre-CTC times, SP maintained 12 train-order offices—open 24 hours a day, seven days a week—in the 47 miles between Bakersfield and Tehachapi.

Even in my time there, this was a busy line. I can't recall ever seeing the Hill dispatcher's CTC panel without any train movements on it—there was always a train somewhere. Alas, I was then nothing other than a casual observer to this scene, as I continued to toil away dropping wheels,

Elderly Mogul 1774 (Baldwin, 1902) slumbers in SP's Bakersfield roundhouse one night in July 1955, during the same hot summer that author Read worked there.

Don Sims



Richard Houghton

An eastbound freight out of Bakersfield departs Woodford, halfway up the "Hill" to Tehachapi, after a water stop for its multiple 4-8-8-2's.

packing leaky throttles on balky steam engines, and otherwise standing on the maintenance sidelines as the high-iron adventure of railroad operations marched before my eyes.

Keeping up appearances

Not that service in the roundhouse was devoid of drama. Initially assigned to the laborer pool, I was set to work scrubbing down locomotive tenders with a long-handled brush and a steam hose. On a long, hot, California afternoon this was not a particularly pleasant occupation.

As I scrubbed, a little weasel-faced painter would appear on the scene with a spray gun and a barrel of black paint to start refreshing the appearance of the locomotives—regardless of whether they had been washed. On the engines I hadn't gotten to yet, he simply applied the new paint to the accumulated grime. Despite my appeals to let me wash the surfaces before turning the spray gun loose, he ignored my

concerns and set about doing what I assume he was hired to accomplish. At least SP was sufficiently concerned about appearances that it had me scrubbing tenders and weasel-face spraying black paint on them.

After I'd spent a few weeks on the wash track, the roundhouse foreman approached me with an offer to be third-trick turntable operator. I took the job, and my pay jumped from 98 cents an hour to \$1.02 an hour—wow! The fact that my work hours were now midnight to 8 a.m. didn't seem too significant.

The next night, I showed up to assume my new position, dutifully clad against the cold and fog in my old Marine Corps field jacket. Instructions were, as usual, pretty sketchy. Inbound locomotives were to be placed on a roundhouse track under the direction of the hostler (where he got *his* instructions from was a matter of mystery). More clearly, the roundhouse foreman would dictate which locomotives would be backed out of the round-

The only safety instruction I can recall hearing in those pre-OSHA days was, "Watch your toes."



Jim Morley

At SP's Dunsmuir (Calif.) roundhouse in 1947, a gas ring heats a driver tire so it can be removed; author Read did this work at Bakersfield.

house and then spotted on the outbound leads.

One night, all was going well until I was trying to line up a 4-8-2 for movement into the roundhouse. I cribbed the turntable rails into what I thought was alignment with the assigned stall track and started to throw a lantern signal to have the hostler move forward off the table. Fortunately, I was on the wrong side of the locomotive, so the hostler didn't see my signal right away.

As I walked around the locomotive to signal the hostler, I noted that I had split the tracks by a few inches—if the engine had proceeded it would certainly have derailed. I went back to my control cab, inched the table into proper position, checked and double-checked my maneuvering, and then threw my signal to tell the hostler he could move off the turntable. Close call—if that engine had gone on the ground, I would have gone into the ranks of the unemployed.

Life on the drop pit

My next move up the roundhouse pecking order was to be appointed a machinists' helper. That meant you got to do all the dirty work that the regular machinists were loath to tackle. However, as I was now in an apprentice position, I was qualified for membership in the International Association of Machinists union. My wage went up 2 cents an hour, and it was daytime work.

Almost without fail, new hires in this position were assigned to the drop pit. The primary task here was the removal of pairs of driving wheels so they could be fitted



Andy Saez; Kenneth G. Johnson collection

Future excursion-train star GS-4 No. 4449 pulls out of Bakersfield with the Los Angeles–Oakland *San Joaquin Daylight* in summer 1956.

with new tires. This involved the following labor-intensive procedure of removing the side rods.

A qualified machinist would disconnect the valve gear and eccentrics, leaving the rods and wheelsets free to move. At that point, the machinist would usually depart the scene and leave the helpers to remove the rods. This involved beating the drift pins, which were about $\frac{3}{4}$ inch to 1 inch in size, out of the rod-holding nuts with a ball-peen hammer. Removing the nuts was accomplished with a long-handled, 8- or 10-inch-diameter box wrench. The procedure took the form of one man holding the wrench while the other would strike



a 20-pound sledgehammer against the handle of the box wrench until the holding nut came free. At that point it became a little dicey, since the next action was to pinch the side rods off their axles using crowbars until gravity took over and the rod came clamoring down onto the concrete floor. Considering that these rods could weigh several thousand pounds, it behooved you to remember where your feet were. The only safety instruction I recall hearing in those pre-OSHA days was, "Watch your toes."

Once the binder blocks that held the axles to the frame had been removed—another messy, slugfest job—the individual wheelsets were positioned one at a time on a section of track over a hydraulic elevator that was then lowered into the pit. After the elevator platform was lowered, it was then manually ratcheted in a crosswise pit to where it was below an adjacent track and then raised to track level for movement into the backshop. Since the hydraulic elevator's controls were located in the pit and it took two men to operate the ratcheting levers, that meant both of you had to be down there as the wheelset lowered.

As the wheels came down, the associated driving boxes and brass positioning wedges came down with them, resting on the axle. On the first day of our tour of duty, another new man and I, garbed in our spanking-new overalls, were positioned in the pit watching our first set of wheels slowly descend. Suddenly, two 100-plus-pound wedges broke loose from their driving box and came hurtling toward us. Luckily we scrambled out of the way and avoided having our

brains bashed in. Our indoctrination had failed to mention this particular safety issue. As we were to subsequently learn, most of the time the wedges fell harmlessly onto the elevator platform, but not always . . .

The next move generally involved five men. One would be stationed at the roadway between the roundhouse and the backshop to warn people that a set of wheels was coming out. Two others would be stationed in the backshop where the turning lathes were located, and the other two would start coaxing the wheels into motion with crowbars. Once moving, the wheelset would take on a mind of its own and start

rapidly rolling into the backshop. The two men at the wheel lathe would throw a crosstie in front of the approaching wheels as a stopping device. Usually this procedure

worked; however, there was enough chipped concrete in the wall at the end of the track to be a testimonial to the fact that there were times when a tie was insufficient to stop a wheelset.

From there, the wheelset was hoisted several inches into the air, and a gas-fired ring was positioned around the tire and ignited. Since the steel tire and the wheel were of different metals, the tire would expand sufficiently to where it could be beaten off the wheel by two men wielding five-pound sledge hammers. I still bear the scars from when the gas ring slipped and lodged between the gauntlet on my glove and the cuff of my denim jacket.

Reinstalling the turned tire and the reassembly of the wheel sets took precisely the reverse order.

When Al and I punched in next morning, the 3713 was pitched tender-first into the turntable pit.



Richard Steinheimer

You'll note in the above discussion there is no mention of any power tools associated with this operation. Nearly everything was accomplished by manual labor and the most rudimentary of hand tools.

How to tie up a railroad

After some time in the roundhouse, I was teamed up with an old-head machinist named Al Ward. Al was approaching retirement age but was an affable individual who took the time to help a still-wet-behind-the-ears, somewhat reluctant, but aspiring machinist.

The means of assigning work for the day was for the roundhouse foreman to pass out a batch of 3x5-inch cards on which were annotated the chores that each of the running repair crews was expected to accomplish during the shift. There were, of course, always more cards than there was time to do the work. Cards for work that hadn't been accomplished were passed to the foreman of the next shift, 4-to-midnight. The regular second-trick foreman was a little, red-haired, bantam-rooster kind of guy who had the bad habit of not listening to what people were trying to tell him.

One day Al and I were given a card instructing us to repack a leaky throttle on 2-10-2 No. 3713. We didn't get to that job, and Al tried to stop Red long enough to explain that fact. Red dismissed us with a wave of his hand, grabbed up our cards, stuffed them into his overall pocket, and resumed his tearing about the roundhouse.

The locomotive was spotted in one of the roundhouse stalls with its tender pointed at the turntable. Someone had neglected to place a chain under the driving wheels, and the Johnson bar was still somewhat in the reverse position. Dur-

ing the evening there was a call for some additional power north of Bakersfield. Red instructed the engine watchman to fire up the 3713, which the watchman dutifully proceeded to accomplish. This set of circumstances, coupled with the fact that the ground had settled over years of use until there was a barely perceptible downward slope between the roundhouse and the turntable, had fateful consequences.

You can probably envision what happened next. After a few hours, the engine built up a head of steam to where its leaky throttle allowed it to make a quarter turn in reverse, which was sufficient to start it rolling out of its stall and into the turntable pit. When Al and I punched in next morning, the 3713 was pitched tender-first into the turntable pit, a situation that effectively tied up the San Joaquin Division for the next few hours.

ing the evening there was a call for some additional power north of Bakersfield. Red instructed the engine watchman to fire up the 3713, which the watchman dutifully proceeded to accomplish. This set of circumstances, coupled with the fact that the ground had settled over years of use until there was a barely perceptible downward slope between the roundhouse and the turntable, had fateful consequences.

Back to the telegraph key

Not too long after that episode, I received a call from the Order of Railway Telegraphers business manager that they were hiring telegraphers on SP's Sacramento-Oakland line. The next morning I contacted the chief dispatcher at Oakland Pier. He advised that, "Yes, they're hiring telegraphers." He wired me a trip pass, and I loped on down to the roundhouse and advised my boss, Mr. McCutchins, the Master Mechanic, that I was resigning for a job that I really didn't have yet. That evening I boarded train 57, the Owl, and headed for Oakland. My roundhouse days were over. ■

SP heaven in a California canyon

Two preservation groups tend the Southern Pacific legacy at the Niles Canyon Railway

By Elrond Lawrence

Photos by the author

In a narrow canyon just east of California's San Francisco Bay, it's 1940 again. Southern Pacific 2472, a handsome 4-6-2 Pacific, is steaming along the banks of Alameda Creek, winding through coastal hills with a matching train of Harriman coaches.

At the opposite end of the canyon, SP "Black Widow" GP9 5623 relives the 1950's as the veteran diesel idles beside the restored Sunol depot. Not far away, a small yard holds an all-star collection of SP equipment: Black Widow SD9 5472, plus NW2 1423 and Fairbanks-Morse H12-44 1487. And that's only the beginning: Western Pacific diesels trade glances with Quincy Railroad steam, Yosemite Valley coaches, a California Western railbus, and an assortment of other vintage cars.

Amazingly, this can all be found within a 10-mile stretch of track that retraces the Central Pacific's first transcontinental railroad into California.

"Is this heaven?" a wide-eyed railfan might ask.

No—it's Niles Canyon.

A premier rail history operation

Twenty-five years after the Southern Pacific Railroad walked away from its original Bay Area main line, the Niles Canyon Railway (NCRY) has quickly become one of California's premier rail history operations, anchored by the largest collection of operating SP equipment in the West. With an unspoiled setting bracketed by two historic towns, NCRY has even bigger plans for the future.

The line is operated by the nonprofit Pacific Locomotive Association, which

revived the former SP right of way in 1988. Steam and diesel trains operate year-round between the small towns of Niles (part of Fremont) and Sunol, every Sunday from April through September and every other Sunday from January through March. Between Thanksgiving and Christmas, a spectacular holiday "Train of Lights"



The Southern Pacific aura: Tiger-striped SP NW2 1423 leads a Sunday tourist train past a wig-wag near Brightside in April 2006.

winds through the dark canyon five nights a week.

In 2006, NCRY reached new heights when it agreed to house the Golden Gate Railroad Museum's SP collection, highlighted by Pacific 2472—a 1921 Baldwin that typifies SP's everyday power through the canyon in the 1920's, '30's, and '40's. The engine recently emerged from a five-year boiler overhaul to become the star of Niles Canyon, powering a May 24, 2008, photographers' excursion 50 years after a sister Pacific pulled a "Farewell to Steam" trip over the same rails.

Niles Canyon trains retrace the steps of the first Western Pacific Railroad, formed in 1862 to connect San Jose and Sacramento. The first train reached Niles Canyon from San Jose in October 1866. However, corporate problems caused the railroad to suspend operations, and construction was halted.

Central Pacific purchased the company in 1868 and used it as a key transcontinental link, building west from Sacramento through Stockton and Tracy, over Altamont Pass, and across the Livermore Valley. The Niles Canyon line was completed and connected with track to CP's waterfront terminal at Alameda (later shifted to Oakland). The line was opened on September 6, 1869, four months after the driving of the Golden Spike in Utah.

For a time, all trains to and from the San Francisco Bay Area traveled through Niles Canyon. That changed with CP's 1870 purchase of the shorter California Pacific route from Sacramento to Vallejo, the first link in what would become today's

"Cal-P" line along San Pablo Bay to Oakland. With the opening of the Cal-P, the Niles Canyon route became a secondary line.

Central Pacific eventually became part of the SP system; however, the Niles Canyon line wasn't significantly upgraded until the early 1900's, when the railroad came under the control of Edward H. Harriman. As a result, the right of way retains many of its original stone bridge abutments, culverts, and retaining walls from the original 1866 Western Pacific.

In 1909, SP's Niles main line was

joined by the second Western Pacific, which built its main line along the south bank of Alameda Creek with a straighter route. The two railroads shared the canyon for decades, through the steam-to-diesel transition period and the 1949 introduction of WP's *California Zephyr*. Scheduled SP passenger service ended in 1941. Two railfan excursions in 1958 officially closed the door on SP steam through Niles Canyon: a January "Farewell to Steam" trip behind Pacific 2475, and a "Fresno Flyer" special in March behind GS-6 4-8-4 4460.

Recreating the SP aura

By the early 1980's, Union Pacific owned WP's Niles Canyon line, and SP's line was on life support. With most Oakland traffic traveling via the faster Cal-P, SP ended service on its historic route in 1984. Alameda County took title to the right of way, and the rails were pulled up.

Enter the Pacific Locomotive Association, a rail heritage group in nearby Castro Point, which contracted with the county to restore the track between Niles and Sunol, 7 miles. On May 21, 1988, California Western railbus M200 rolled into Sunol, and the Niles Canyon Railway was born.

NCRY has made great strides since those early days. It has expanded to nearly 10 miles, and the PLA—which began with just 6 members—is now 700 strong and growing. The collection of locomotives and cars has nearly filled the four-track Brightside yard, which also boasts shop buildings and a short passing siding. The 1884 Sunol depot, removed in 1941 and converted into a private residence, was returned to its trackside location in 1998 and serves as a ticket office and gift shop. Passengers can now board at either Niles or Sunol.

Lineside details are also beginning to appear: Magnetic Flagmen ("wig-wag" signals) protect private crossings, while semaphores, pole lines, station signs, and a new "tell-tale"—built by a local Boy Scout troop—restore the atmosphere of classic railroading.

"We are really fortunate to have the railroad we do . . . it's an amazing piece of property," says Henry Luna, president of the PLA and one of its founding members. "We're trying to keep the canyon as original as possible, and to maintain the operating traditions of Southern Pacific . . . their employees' day-to-day approach to railroading."

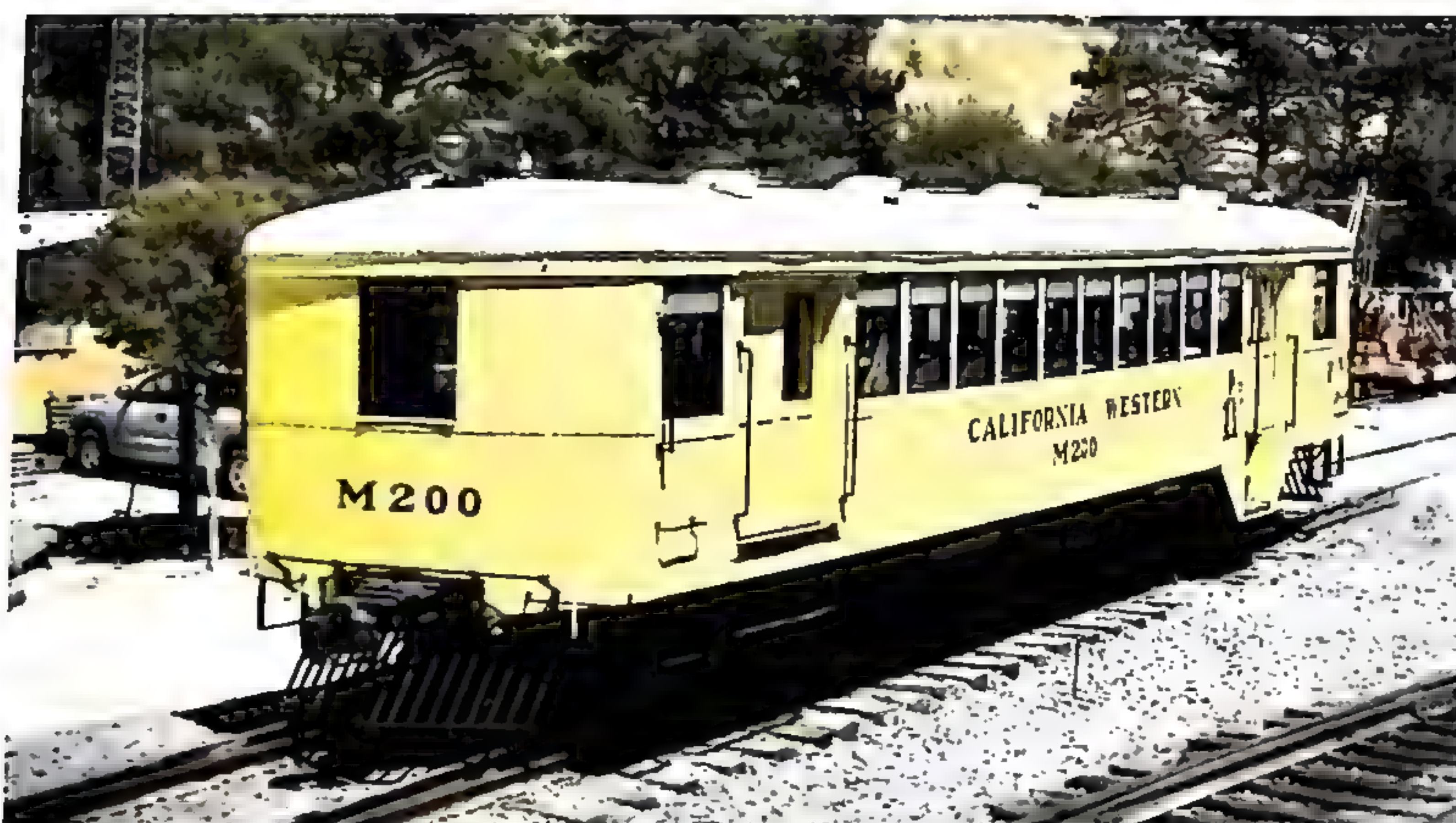
Luna notes that the PLA is about "halfway" to reaching the railroad's



SP Pacific 2472 (top) is right at home as she blasts through Farwell on a Labor Day Weekend fantrip in 2008; the tell-tale was built by Eagle Scouts. East of Niles (above), an all-Harriman consist evokes the 1930's during a 2472 photographers' special on August 30, 2008.



Owned by the Golden Gate Railroad Museum, F7A's 6378 and 6380 are being restored to operating condition and will again wear their original SP "Black Widow" colors.



California Western M200, the railbus that launched the Niles Canyon revival in 1988, idles at Brightside in June 2006. The diesel-hydraulic car was built in 1926 for a Washington logger.



Niles Canyon Railway has surprising variety in its collection, as illustrated by Quincy Railroad No. 2, a 2-6-2T preparing to depart Niles in 2006. NCRY has nine other steam engines.

potential. The group has acquired land near the Niles passenger stop for a roundhouse and turntable. The goal is to develop a "living museum" where restoration projects can be viewed by the public. PLA also plans to complete a wye, and to restore a siding so two trains can run simultaneously between Niles and Sunol.

East of Sunol, PLA's grand plan is to rebuild the SP line to Pleasanton, extending its track another 3 miles. Currently, the line ends just beyond a connection with the UP at Hearst siding. Once the extension is complete, a vintage signaling system is planned, with semaphores west of Sunol and SP target signals (a.k.a., "searchlights") east to Pleasanton. The semaphores currently near Sunol aren't functioning but make for a nice photo prop.

"It's absolutely amazing that we've even reached the halfway point," says Luna, although he adds that the railroad depends on ticket sales and donations to reach its lofty goals. "The more track we get, and the more facilities we get, the more we can do. Right now, we're rebuilding equipment faster than we can protect it. We need to keep it safe from vandals and weather."

And what a collection! PLA's steam fleet includes a pair of three-truck Heislors and a Shay from Pickering Lumber, plus a Quincy Railroad 2-6-2T, a Robert Dollar Co. 2-6-2T, SP 0-6-0 1269, and others (SP 2467, another Pacific restored by PLA, is currently at the California State Railroad Museum in Sacramento). The SP diesel fleet is highlighted by the two Black Widow EMD's and "tiger striped" NW2 1423. An Alco switcher, No. 1218, is in the final stages of restoration.

The Western Pacific is represented by F7 918-D, restored to orange and silver, and "Perlman green" GP7 713. Other diesels include an Oakland Terminal Baldwin, a Santa Fe 44-ton GE, and switchers from Whitcomb and Plymouth.

Niles Canyon's passenger-car fleet is equally impressive, highlighted by Hariman coaches from SP and WP, and other cars from Arizona Eastern and Santa Fe. Especially prized are two Yosemite Valley Railroad survivors from the early 1900's: RPO-baggage 107 and observation car 330. Another rare gem is SP triple-unit diner *Cascade Club*, an articulated kitchen/dormitory-dining room-bar/lounge awaiting restoration. Open-air coaches include the *K. C. Bones* and three others rebuilt from flatcars. The freight roster features boxcars, refrigerator cars, gondolas, tank cars, cabooses,



Heaven on Earth for SP diesel lovers: Niles Canyon's "Black Widow" EMD road-switchers await their next assignment at Brightside in 2008.

and more from SP, Santa Fe, WP, Sacramento Northern, Pacific Fruit Exchange, and other owners.

Golden Gate treasures

The collection swelled dramatically when PLA contracted with the Golden Gate Railroad Museum in San Francisco to house GGRM's roster of former SP equipment, including Pacific 2472, FM diesel 1487, business car *Oakland*, RPO 5901, club-lounge car 2979, and others. Redevelopment plans forced the GGRM to leave its longtime home at the Hunter's Point Navy shipyards. The fleet arrived in stages, with the final move taking place in the early hours of December 31, 2006.

The arrival of 2472 was big news for Niles Canyon fans. At the time, the Pacific was midway through a federally mandated overhaul that cost GGRM more than \$300,000. In February 2008, the engine finally emerged from the Brightside yard under steam. Two months later, 2472 handled her first excursion during a series of Memorial Day fund-raising trips. On a Saturday photo train, she pulled a 1940's-era train of matching Harrimans. It was a special thrill for Luna, who rode both this train and the 2475-powered "Farewell to Steam" trip 50 years earlier.

"[The canyon] hadn't changed at all," he recalls. "This [trip] was much

more fun, because we had more photo runbys. There's less track now, mainly sidings we haven't restored yet, but the feeling was still there. We're looking forward to more trips with the 2472."

"That weekend was the ultimate fulfillment of our mission," agrees Dave Hensarling, president of GGRM. "It was a great feeling, and a triumphant milestone for our membership. This is a really wonderful place to run." A follow-up series of trips with 2472 took place during Labor Day weekend.

Following the 2472 refit, GGRM turned its attention to its *Oakland* business car, club-lounge 2979, and RPO 5901, the last survivor from the "snowbound" *City of San Francisco* in 1952. The group is also restoring a pair of SP F7's, Nos. 6378 and 6380. While GGRM is evaluating its long-term plans, Hensarling is quick to note that PLA "has been a gracious host." In an interesting aside, the group sold a rare articulated *Coast Daylight* coach to PLA when GGRM thinned its roster before the move.

With such a sweeping collection in a scenic setting, Luna says Niles Canyon has the potential to become a "magnificent" operating museum, and creative plans are in the works for 2009. Vintage diesel weekends will take place in the spring. Railfan events

showcasing the extensive SP collection are also planned.

On a larger scale, the city of Fremont is developing a plaza in its Niles district that revolves around the railroad and the city's 1901 SP depot, which is being returned to its trackside location. The area is already home to the Pacific Bus Museum, which ferries Niles tourists with a fleet of vintage vehicles. Just as the railroad created the town of Niles, today's NCRY has revitalized the historic business district.

"As Niles develops, we'll be running more and more trains out of there," says Luna. "Sunol is happy to have us, but they don't want to be overrun by the railroad. The more people we can send to Niles, the happier both towns will be.

"It's an absolutely ideal railroad," he adds, and those who experience this time warp in the coastal hills will quickly agree. ■

If you go

Niles Canyon Railway trains can be boarded at either Niles or Sunol. The Niles station is located at 37001 Mission Boulevard in Fremont; the Sunol depot is at 6 Kilcare Road. Call (925) 862-9063, or visit www.ncry.org. The Golden Gate Railroad Museum's Web site is www.ggrm.org.

Spring Break 1950

Why go home for vacation when I could photograph trains around Chicago?

By Hal Lewis • Photos by the author

During my freshman year (1949–50) at Purdue University in Lafayette, Ind., when many of my fellow students scattered for home for Spring Break, instead of going back to my home in Washington, D.C., I headed 150 miles northwest for some railroad photography in Chicago, the nation's railroad capital.

It was my second visit to the Windy City to see and photograph trains, but the first with time available to really look around. My previous visit had been just a day trip in fall 1949, when I rode a special New York Central (Big Four) train from Lafayette to visit the Chicago Railroad Fair, on the Lake Michigan waterfront south of the Loop, where I spent much of the day. Around 4 p.m., though, as I walked back from downtown toward Illinois Central's Central Station (which Big Four trains used) to board the special back to Indiana (due out around 6 p.m.), I got a photo [above right] of Pennsylvania's *Detroit Arrow*. This was fortunate, because the train was discontinued before I returned during Spring Break.

During my day at the Railroad Fair, a chance encounter with local railfans had yielded some photography suggestions. Their advice included descriptions of safe locations with public transportation access where rail photography seemed acceptable. So it was that I took NYC train 415, the *Chicago Special*, up from Lafayette during midday, and spent two nights at the Wabash Hotel south of the Loop. I remember seeing

Erie trains south of Dearborn Station from my hotel window. During the rest of that first day, and the better part of the next two, I walked a lot and rode public transportation to visit numerous rail facilities.

My notes from this trip have long since disappeared, and I had mixed results with my photography. I was using a 2¼x3¼ Crown Graphic camera, which had no range-finder, and my GE incident light meter was so undependable that I guessed on most of my exposures. I don't specifically recall the details of my Chicago meanderings, so the photos here, just a sample of all that I saw, are presented "by railroad." As you see, I did ride commuter trains to the suburbs

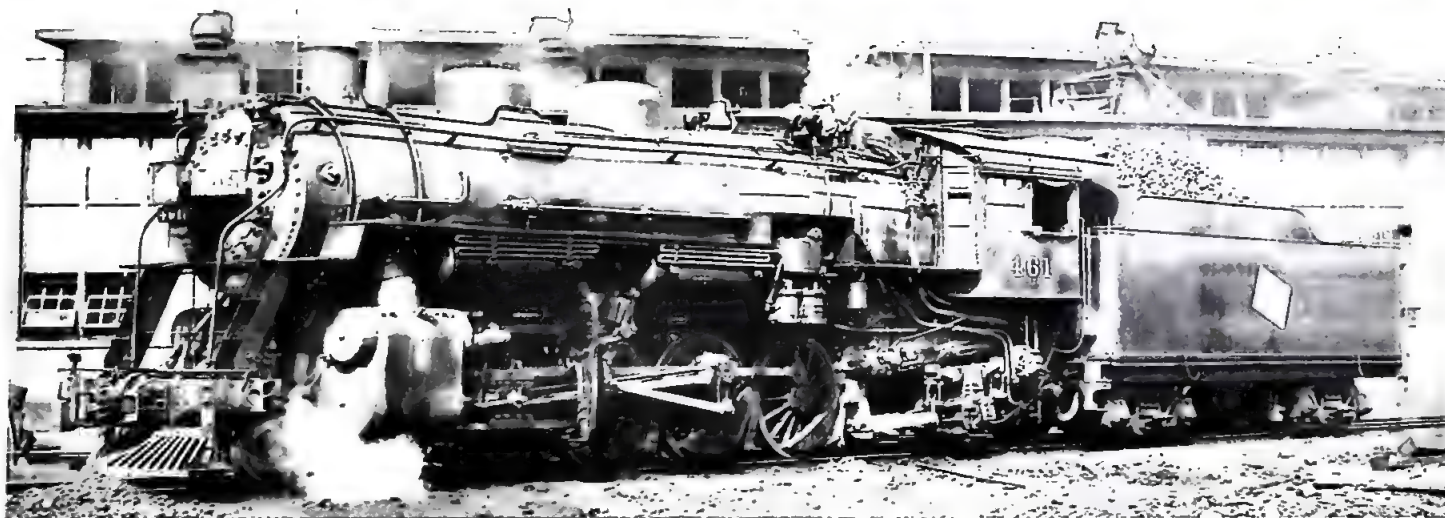
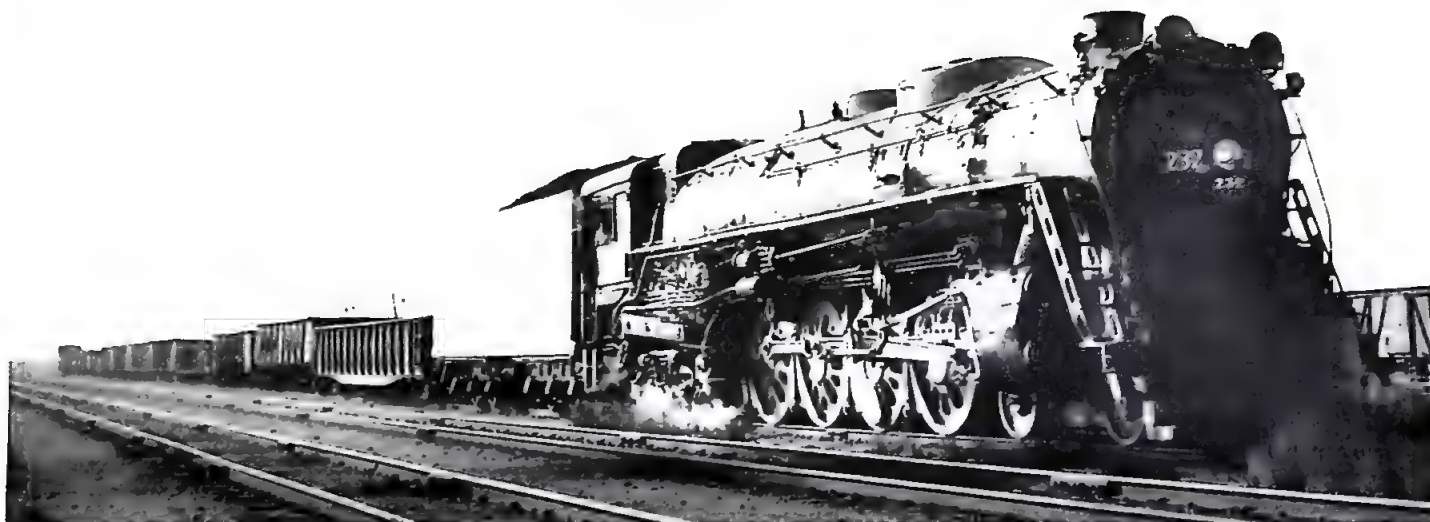


At Dearborn Station one morning, Grand Trunk Western 4-8-4 6332 pulls in with either the *La Salle*, train 5 due at 7 a.m., or the *International*, train 15 due in at 8, both from Toronto via CN.

In a prelude to my Spring Break visit, K4s 3679 in fall 1949 leads PRR 8, the eight-car *Detroit Arrow*, past Pennsy's big freight terminal south of Union Station en route to Fort Wayne, where a Wabash 4-6-2 will take over for the 146.5-mile run to Detroit's Fort Street Union Depot. The *Arrow* was scheduled to run Gary-Fort Wayne, 123 miles, in 108 minutes, a 68.4-mph average.



I caught two New York Central streamliners the same morning just north of the Roosevelt Road viaduct on their last lap into La Salle Street Station: F3's on the *Commodore Vanderbilt* (above), due in at 8:30, and the *20th Century Limited*, due in at 9, behind an A-B duo of E7's (above).



Dieselization was well under way around Chicago in 1950. Milwaukee Road's large facility in suburban Bensenville had little steam active, but S2 4-8-4 232 (top) snuck in from the west with a freight, while USRA Mikado 461 (above) was on the ready track at the roundhouse.



Among the Chicago & North Western subjects I photographed was its unique Baldwin, 5000-A, half locomotive and half baggage car, at 40th Street (above, with an E unit). Pacific 1512, carrying white flags on a short train, was one of the few C&NW steam engines I saw in service.

to visit both Chicago & North Western's Proviso Yard and the Milwaukee Road's yard at Bensenville; as a D.C. native, I'd never seen either railroad. I also hung around at Dearborn and La Salle Street stations downtown, and at Englewood Union Station on the city's south side, to watch passenger trains.

Bensenville was indicative of the dieselization coming: S2 4-8-4 210 was at the wash rack, and a freight came sneaking into the yard from the west behind sister 232. USRA Mikado 461 was on the ready track, and smoke was coming from a couple of the exhaust stacks on the roundhouse. It was a large facility, but there was little other activity. The streamlined cover from an F7-class Hudson was on blocks in the weeds, but I saw no sign of any A-class Atlantics or the F7 speedsters of *Hiawatha* fame.

The C&NW engine facility at Proviso had a dead line with many 0-8-0's and 2-8-2's. Diesel switchers were hustling cars, and Geeps led the freights. There seemed to be no steam in service, but as I was waiting for an inbound suburban train out near Proviso, smoke on the horizon produced elderly Pacific 1512, with white flags, hauling three passenger cars. In the city at the 40th Street diesel shop, I photographed C&NW's unique Baldwin that was half diesel locomotive, half baggage car.

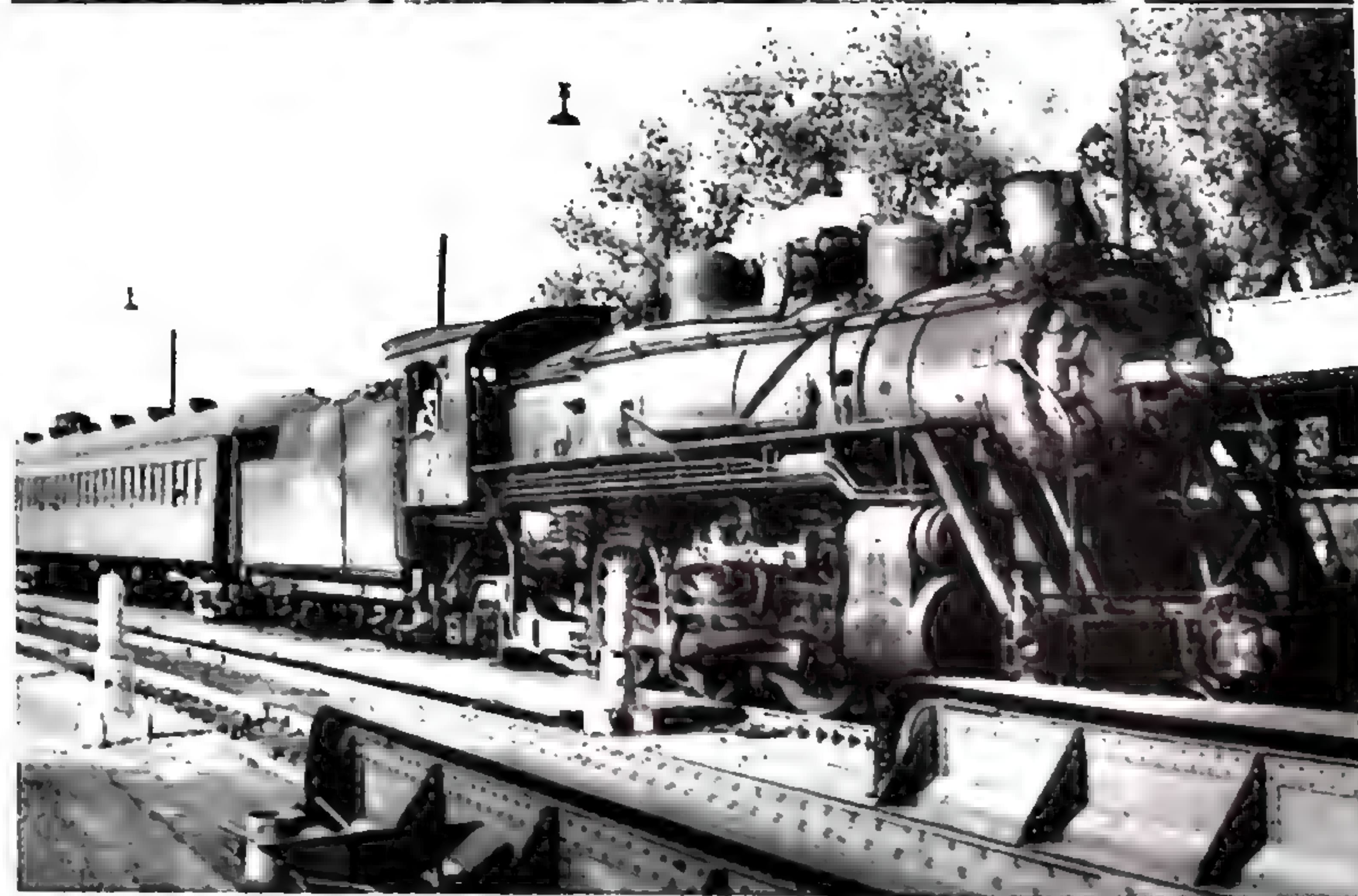
On one of my afternoons, La Salle Street Station was bustling with excitement as New York Central's *Commodore Vanderbilt*, all-first-class *20th Century Limited*, and all-coach *Pacemaker* were being readied for departure. The *Pacemaker* had 4-8-4 Niagara 6011, but the only other NYC steam I saw during my stay was a Pacific used to transfer cars to and from the coach yards. I was told that some secondary trains were still steam-powered, and that was certainly true on the Big Four portion of the NYC, which served Lafayette.

Out at Englewood, I hoped for a PRR T1 and an NYC Niagara, or at least a K4 and a Hudson, racing away eastward from the station, but nothing of the sort occurred when I was there. Of course, I remember seeing only one actual photo of such a race, but this is a legend that only reality can destroy.

The perfect spring weather I enjoyed for two days in Chicago turned bad rather fast, and by the time I got back to Lafayette on NYC's *James Whitcomb Riley* on my third evening, it was snowing! Nevertheless, my Spring Break visit to Chicago was truly memorable. ■



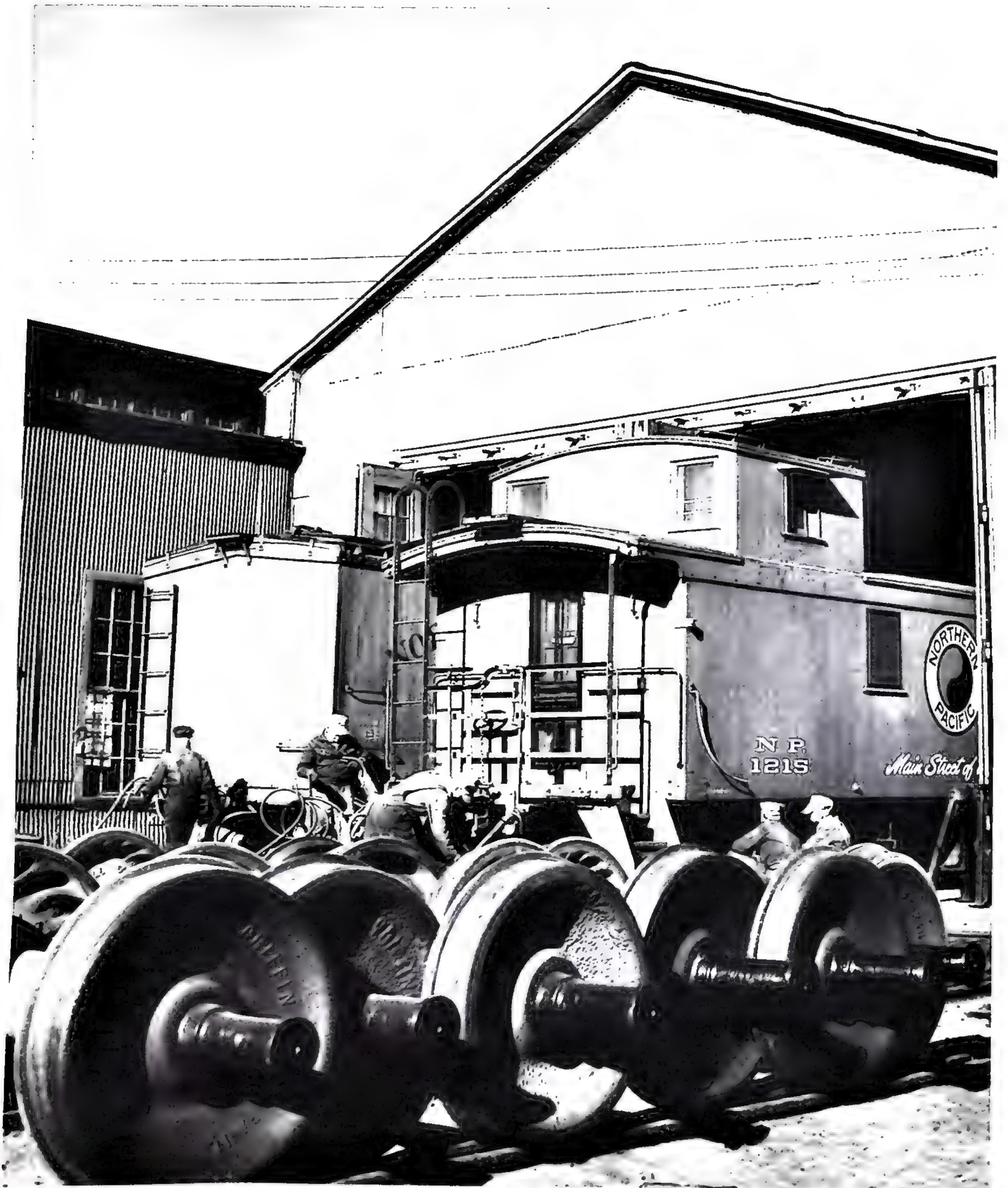
At La Salle Street Station, Niagara 6011 is ready to take New York Central's *Pacemaker* east. It was of the few Central steamers (excluding the Big Four) I saw in service in Chicago.



At Englewood, Rock Island action I photographed included an inbound *Rocket*, probably from Peoria, behind E6 630 (middle) and an outbound suburban train behind Pacific 917 (above). This E6 would turn out to be the last slant-nosed E unit in service in the country.

More on our Web site
See video clips of trains at Englewood station
in the 1940's at www.ClassicTrainsMag.com

Workin' on the Railroad



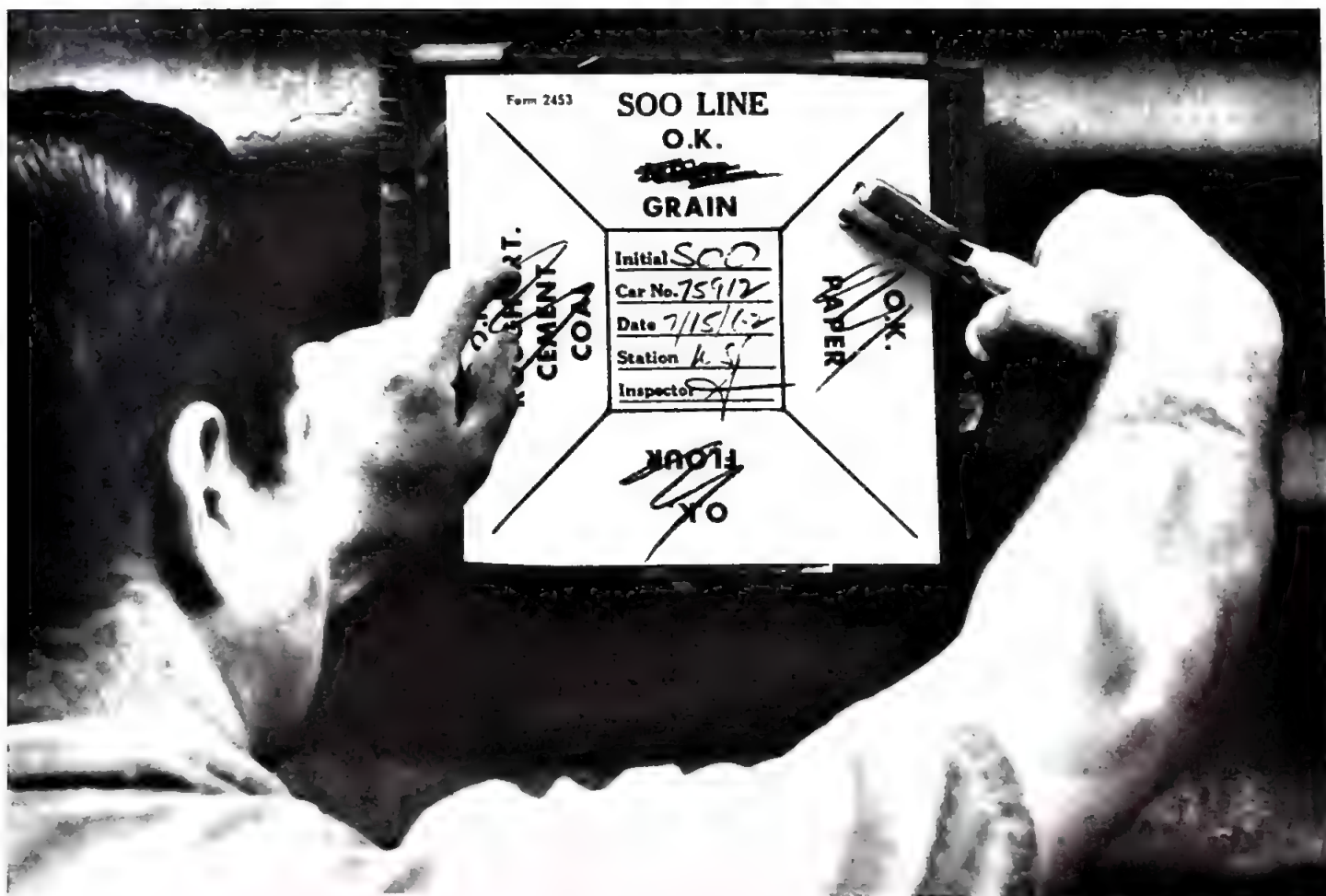
Donald Sims



Soo Line

Car-shop craftsmen

Railroads in the "classic era" traditionally kept work on their freight-car fleets in-house, at their own specialized shop facilities. The craftsmen of the many trades who toiled at these shops were as proud of their work as any locomotive engineer, passenger-train conductor, track-gang laborer, or clerk or draftsman in the general offices. Northern Pacific's shops at Livingston, Mont., handled everything from the big Mallet locomotives to tractors used by the track department. In 1954 (opposite page), a crew at the car shop touches up work on wooden cabooses 1215, beyond several wheelsets that will replace old or defective ones discovered by NP car inspectors. At Soo Line's Shoreham Shops in Minneapolis, another locomotive and car facility, Sam McMinn, an Irish immigrant who was a shipfitter in his homeland, welds on a grain boxcar (left) in readying it for the 1962 harvest rush, while Jerry Wodarck (below), an assistant car foreman at the shop, staples the "O.K." card on a grain car the shop forces have just upgraded.



Soo Line

The Way It Was

When I cast my ballot for the RS3

A late autumn encounter on the Nickel Plate in 1960 made a lasting impression



Many of us who cotton to such things probably can pinpoint the exact time, or place, where we realized we had a favorite locomotive type. For me, the locomotive was the Alco RS3 (I guess RS2's should be included—they look and sound basically alike).

When I "came of age" as a late teen and gained mobility, I lived in the Detroit area. I was fortunate to see everyday steam on the Grand Trunk Western, and managed a precious view glimpses of it on the Baltimore & Ohio and Nickel Plate.

But then, on a visit to South Bend, Ind., for a GTW steam excursion of all things, I fell in with the wrong crowd, the likes of Jerry Pinkepank and Louis

Marre, whose diesel credentials these days are well known. Ever full of curiosity, we pursued diesel knowledge—it was the "in" thing for us younger guys, for steam was about done.

Detroit is home to General Motors, of course, and the city's railroads honored that by assigning mostly EMD units to the area. Only Alco switchers on Wabash, GTW, and Pennsy (and in the Ford plant, natch), plus a single big C-C transfer unit on the Chesapeake & Ohio, made a daily dent in the GM curtain, plus some New York Central Alco (and occasional Baldwin and FM) road power. Only the Central provided us with RS2's and 3's, one or two units at a time, not daily, and usually buried behind FA's and FB's. (One could go

Nickel Plate RS3's 535 and 555 make a persuasive case for their kind as they accelerate an eastbound across the Detroit, Toledo & Ironton diamond at Malinta, Ohio, in 1960.

across to Windsor, Ontario, and see Canadian Pacific RS3's most every day, but we did so only periodically.) One of my train-chasing pals, the late Henry G. "Hank" Goerke, spent vacation time every summer up near Tawas City, Mich., headquarters of the Detroit & Mackinac, which had the very first RS2 and six RS stablemates.

So I suppose I was swayed by Hank's bias, and his slides, but to us, Geeps were old hat while RS's were treats anywhere in Michigan. As for the "exact moment" the RS3 won my vote, it was



Two photos, J. David Ingles

Low autumn light, rakish NKP livery, smoke from boxy stacks, and a symphony of Alco sound combine for a lasting impression at Malinta.

On stage at Hackettstown

In a little drama once played out at thousands of places across the continent, mail and express is unloaded and loaded during a train's station stop while, out of view to the right, passengers climb off and on the coaches. The particulars are these: This is a Delaware, Lackawanna & Western local at Hackettstown, N.J., near the end of its Hoboken–Washington (N.J.) run behind Pacific No. 1128, sometime in 1947. Supervising the proceedings is the train's dark-suited conductor, reaching for his pocket watch as a prelude to giving the engineman the highball out of Hackettstown.



Aaron G. Fryer

down in northern Ohio, at Malinta, in November 1960, the exact date lost to history . . . on the Nickel Plate, of all roads. My dad, an official with the (all-EMD) Detroit, Toledo & Ironton, and I were prowling around west of Toledo on a now-forgotten mission, and ran across a westbound local on the old Clover Leaf line behind RS3's 537 and 542,

crossing the Maumee River at Grand Rapids, Ohio. I don't remember what happened to that train, or why we went on west, but my next slides were over at Malinta, where that NKP line crossed the DT&I. We stopped in at the tower, and learned an eastbound NKP counterpart was close.

The train showed up in waning after-

noon light, again behind two RS3's, 535 and 555 (almost the Alpha and Omega of NKP's 23 RS3's, in 1960 among a fleet of 35 RS11's and 160 Geeps). The westbound had been a fleeting matinee encounter, but this eastbound hit the main stage. The units uncoupled west of town and pulled ahead with some cars, set out and/or picked up on the DT&I interchange track in back of the diamond, then recoupled. The next act brought down the house for me.

Smooth as silk, those two graceful road-switchers, with their rounded cab and hood outlines, attractive striping, and boxy smokestacks out front in long-hood-forward operation, charged through town. After backing off a tad on the throttle and thumping the diamond, the hogger notched 'em out, and Alco's finest quickly had their train up to speed, chortling and smoking their way off toward Toledo. I was hooked.

The sounds of those two RS3's splitting the crisp afternoon air in getting their train going made a lasting impression that resonates to this day. You know how it is when you're too busy concentrating on what's in your camera's viewfinder to "get the big picture"? That didn't happen at Malinta. I got the photos, but more to the point, I cast my ballot for a lifetime.—J. David Ingles



J. David Ingles

The RS3's (and RS2's) low-profile hoods, rounded contours, and AAR Type B trucks gave them a look all their own. Alco and Canadian licensee MLW built 1,753 between 1946 and 1956.

Hold the *Panama*!

The IC's president took a personal interest in his road's top train

The *Panama Limited* was for many years the premier, first-class luxury train of the Illinois Central on its Chicago-New Orleans route. All-Pullman in consist, it left Chicago's Central Station (a.k.a. Twelfth Street) promptly at 5:00 p.m. daily on its 921-mile dash to a 9:30 a.m. arrival in the Crescent City.

Many IC employees and patrons knew that if the *Panama* was so much as a minute off in its daily departure for New Orleans, IC President Wayne A. Johnston demanded there be an explanation on his desk the following day as to the reason for the tardiness.

Mr. Johnston had great affection for the *Panama*. Not only was it the flagship of his railroad, it was the symbol of all that was great and good with the high-speed luxury trains of the 1940's and '50's. Woe betide any IC employee who delayed his beloved trains 5 and 6!

Wayne Johnston was IC president and board chairman from 1944 to 1966. He died on December 4, 1967, three days short of his scheduled retirement as board chairman, and only five weeks after the *Panama* finally added coaches to its consist (albeit under the *Magnolia Star* name, to preserve the *Panama's* cachet ["The End of the All-Pullman Limiteds," Summer 2008]).

Two vignettes come to mind that illustrate the fondness and pride the IC president, his staff, and employees had for the *Panama*.

A good friend of mine, Jim Neubauber, in the late 1950's gathered a group of four friends to ride the *Panama* down to Effingham, Ill., to enjoy the train's famous King's Dinner. Return would be on No. 2, the *City of New Orleans*.

The King's Dinner, at a special price, featured a meat course and a fish course, and included a cocktail, wine, coffee, dessert, and an after-dinner drink, plus a souvenir pin in the shape of a crown.

Jim checked in three of his four guests at a table in the main waiting room of Central Station, then made sure they boarded the train. At 4:58 p.m., the fourth guest was still missing—a no-show. Jim hurried down to the

loading track. As he ran up to the last open vestibule, the car porter asked, "Mr. Neubauber?" Jim answered, "Yes," as he climbed aboard. The porter turned to the conductor, standing in the vestibule, and said, "Mr. Neubauber."

The conductor, watch in one hand, signal cord in the other, yanked twice. The porter tossed the stepbox up, climbed the steps, swung the door shut, and the *Panama* began to roll at 5:00 p.m., straight up. Mr. Johnston's pride and joy was on-time as usual.

The second vignette involves my uncle, Chuck Havens, who served for many years as director of physical plant for the University of Illinois. His duties frequently took him to Chicago, 127 miles north of Champaign/Urbana, the main site of the university.

During this time the "only" way to travel north and return was via Illinois Central's double-track speedway. His train of choice on his return from Chicago was the *Panama Limited*.

During the 1950's, Wayne Johnston served on a community board which was to work with the City of Chicago in selecting a site for the Uoff's new Chicago campus. My Uncle Chuck was the key official from the main campus who worked with the committee in the site-selection process.

One afternoon, Uncle Chuck was meeting with Mr. Johnston in his office at Central Station. As the meeting progressed, Chuck kept glancing at his watch, aware that he was about to miss his train—the *Panama*.

The IC president asked him the reason for his concern about the time. My uncle said he was hoping to make the *Panama* in order to be home that evening with his family.

Mr. Johnston pressed a buzzer on his desk that summoned a staff member from the outer office. When the aide appeared, Mr. Johnston, to the amazement of the aide and my uncle, ordered, "Hold the *Panama*!" He then turned and said, "Let's finish our business. You'll make your train."

Though it left Chicago a little late,

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Frank Peterson photo, Dan Pope collection

A little girl meets a lady

Sugar and spice and everything nice meets steel, coal, and boiling water as a little girl on a tricycle waits for Pennsylvania Railroad K4s Pacific 5476 to cross Sample Street in South Bend, Ind., with a Notre Dame football special. The date is September 25, 1948, meaning that No. 5476, among the last-built of PRR's 425 K4's, is a still-youthful 21 years of age. She's been modified with a drop-coupler pilot, but her headlight, though also new, is in the original smokebox-front position—details no doubt lost on the youngster taking in the spectacle of steam.

the train with my uncle aboard arrived in Champaign right on the advertised.

There is something wonderful and nostalgic about these episodes: the swift luxury train, the pride of the employees in the great transportation system over which it traveled, the personalized service, and, above all, the prerogative of the Illinois Central's president to offer his assistance to my uncle.

Somehow, I just can't see this happening at O'Hare airport.

I think we've lost something in the way of excellence—a way of life as demonstrated by "Hold the Panama!"

—William O. Vogel

The mums

Decades after they perished, three railroaders were not forgotten

It was the lure of the machinery that first attracted me to trains. But technology is nothing without people to operate it, and I suppose it's a side effect of the aging process, but now it is the very human side of this business that leaves the biggest impact on me.

On a pleasant June day years ago, while chasing trains on the Northwestern Pacific, I came across a small monument in its Eureka (Calif.) yard. Here

was a tribute to three men—engineer, fireman, and brakeman—who lost their lives decades before in a railroad accident. Atop the two-tiered concrete obelisk sat a steam locomotive bell, signifying to even the most naive of bystanders the profession of the fallen. I looked at it for a moment and then went about my business snapping the portraits of the various Southern Pacific SD9's that were then the trademark of the NWP.



David Lustig

Though I went to Eureka to see SD9's, it's the flowers at a memorial that I remember today.

(Later, I researched the incident the monument commemorated. The men were D. G. Liscom, engineer; T. R. Porter, fireman; and H. J. Aure, brakeman. They died on January 17, 1953, when a landslide swept their locomotive, NWP Ten-Wheeler 112, into the Eel River at Scotia Bluff. Their bodies were recovered, and the monument was dedicated later in 1953. Engine 112 was salvaged, but never ran again; it's now displayed at the California State Railroad Museum. The monument has been relocated to the Fortuna NWP depot museum.)

On my way out of the yard, pleased with my well-lit catch of first-generation diesels that never seemed to migrate down to my home area in Los Angeles, I turned to take a last look at the monument. There was something different from when I first spied it: the flowers.

Sometime in the 20-minute span I was blissfully recording the nuts and bolts of railroading, someone, perhaps a friend or relative of the fallen, had laid a bouquet of mums at the base of the monument. These men were not forgotten.

And I have not forgotten them, either. Whenever I get too caught up in welded rail, turbochargers, and onboard computers, I think about those mums. It's one of the very few railroad photos that I've never had to rummage through my notes to remember when and where I took it.—David Lustig

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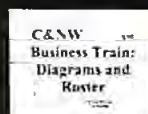
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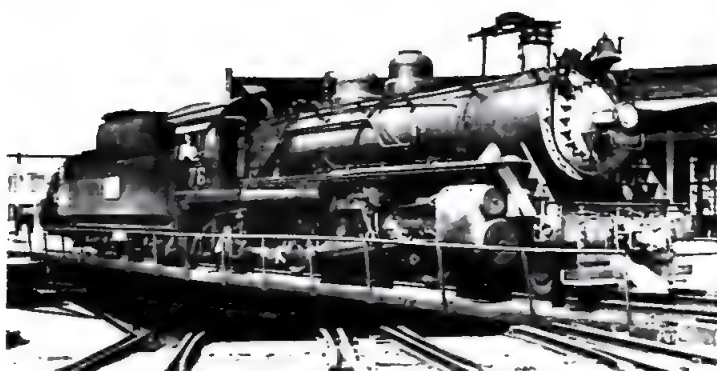
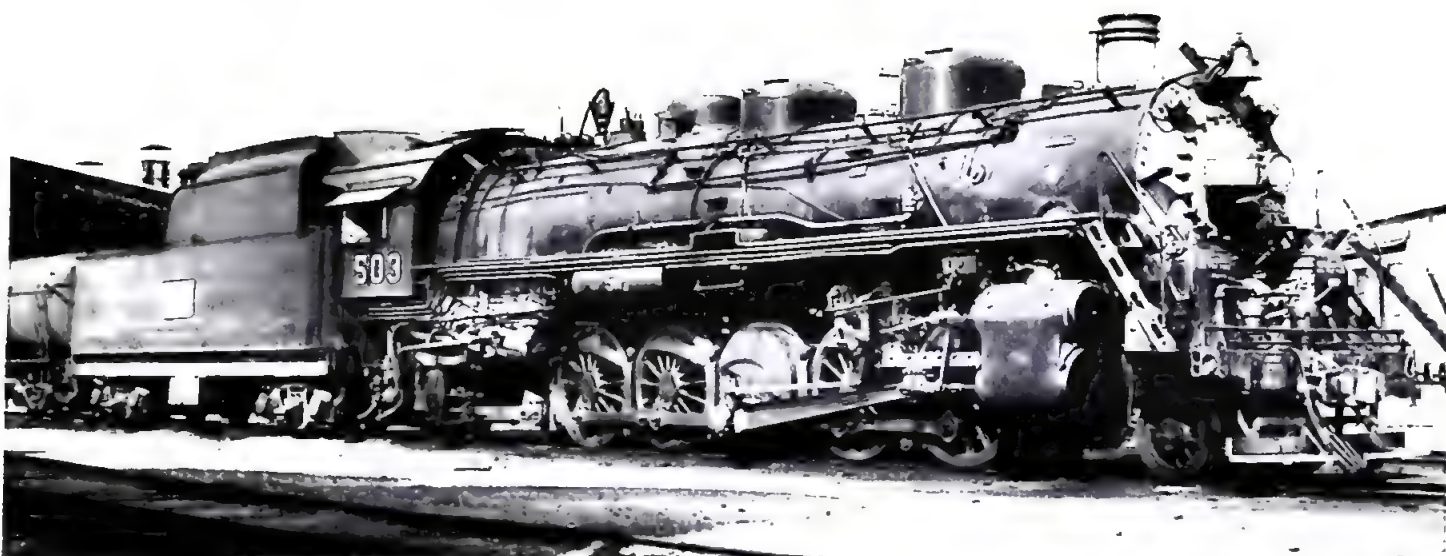
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Muskogee memories

Rebuffed by the big KCS, two steam-hunters were welcomed on the folksy Muskogee Group



Three photos, Joe Collas

Muskogee 2-10-2 No. 503 (top), light Mikado 76 (above left), and heavy Mike 94 pose for their portraits at the Muskogee roundhouse. Unusually for the region, Muskogee engines burned coal, not oil, thanks to deposits of black diamonds in western Arkansas and eastern Oklahoma.

In the early 1950's, a friend and I traveled extensively in an attempt to photograph as many steam locomotives as possible before their impending destruction due to dieselization. On one expedition, we chose a corner of Oklahoma and southeast Kansas for what we anticipated would result in an encounter with some of the Kansas City Southern's massive 2-10-4 types.

However, on August 26, 1950, we suffered a setback when we were denied permission to enter KCS's Pitts-

burg (Kans.) terminal. We did succeed, however, in photographing the giant engines elsewhere in action.

Reeling from this unexpected treatment, we hurried on to Muskogee, Okla., in hopes of finding steam on a trio of affiliated roads collectively known as the Muskogee Group: the Kansas, Oklahoma & Gulf; the Midland Valley; and the Oklahoma City-Ada-Atoka [see "Fallen Flags Remembered," Spring 2008 CLASSIC TRAINS]. I had long admired the railroads' fat-

boilered and low-slung 2-8-0's adorned with striping on boiler domes and tenders. Upon our arrival there, we were delighted to encounter live, active steam power in abundance.

Mindful of our recent experience with the KCS, we sneaked around, taking as many pictures as quickly as possible. Soon, needing to change film in our cameras, we retired to the shade and relative seclusion behind the roundhouse. Busily involved in our task and hurrying to return to our ef-

forts, we were suddenly alarmed to hear an authoritative voice ask if we were wanting to photograph more of the locomotives at hand. We looked up to find a man of obvious authority, attired in white shirt, tie, and straw hat, asking the question.

Somewhat shaken, we stammered a reply in the affirmative. Then the gentleman asked if we would like to photograph the idle locomotives in the roundhouse, which, of course, we did. He then introduced himself as none other than J. W. Womble, superintendent of motive power for the three Muskogee roads. To our continuing astonishment, Mr. Womble summoned the roundhouse foreman and requested that he pose each and every locomotive still in steam on the turntable for us. This the engine hostler did, and we clicked merrily away until every engine was duly recorded.

Mr. Womble turned what had started as a day of disappointment into a day of delight. We could not thank him enough. He gave us a delightful experience to remember.—Joe Collias

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The Way It Was

The last dance

When a Santa Fe engine watchman abandoned his post, the consequences were disastrous



Two photos, Jack Elwood collection

The explosion at Serra, Calif., took the classic form of such incidents, with the boiler flying hundreds of yards from the running gear. The watchman likely never knew what hit him.

During the era of steam locomotives, many of us in engine service loved those gallant machines, but we were also very aware of the inherent dangers associated with them. They required constant attention, always keeping in mind the destructive forces held at bay. Prudent adherence to safety practices at all times was essential.

This story takes place at a small station named Serra on the Santa Fe Rail-

way's Los Angeles-San Diego line. One Saturday in the early 1950's, a work train, its work done for the day, was parked on an auxiliary track at the station. As a steam locomotive—oil-fired Mikado No. 3139—was the power for the work train, it was necessary to have an engine watchman present to keep steam pressure up during the time the work train was not working and the crew was getting their rest. The engine

watchman's job was not very desirable, and consequently fell to the lowest fireman on the seniority list.

The station at Serra was a picturesque little structure of white stucco with a red clay tile roof, located on the west end of a sweeping 50-mph curve, with the first panoramic view of the Pacific Ocean that one gets from the train as the railroad joins the surf on its way to San Diego.

The young engine watchman, sent down from Los Angeles, arrived at Serra on Saturday evening to watch the work train engine for Saturday night and Sunday. The engine had to be ready to go to work early Monday morning. The watchman's duties were minimal, keeping pressure at a workable level, water in the boiler, and supplying the engine with sand and lubricating oil. Steam pressure was maintained by periodically starting up

the fire, building up steam pressure so that the water injectors would work to supply water to the boiler, then putting the fire out. The engine then needed little attention for two or three hours

Steam locomotives required constant attention, always keeping in mind the destructive forces held at bay.

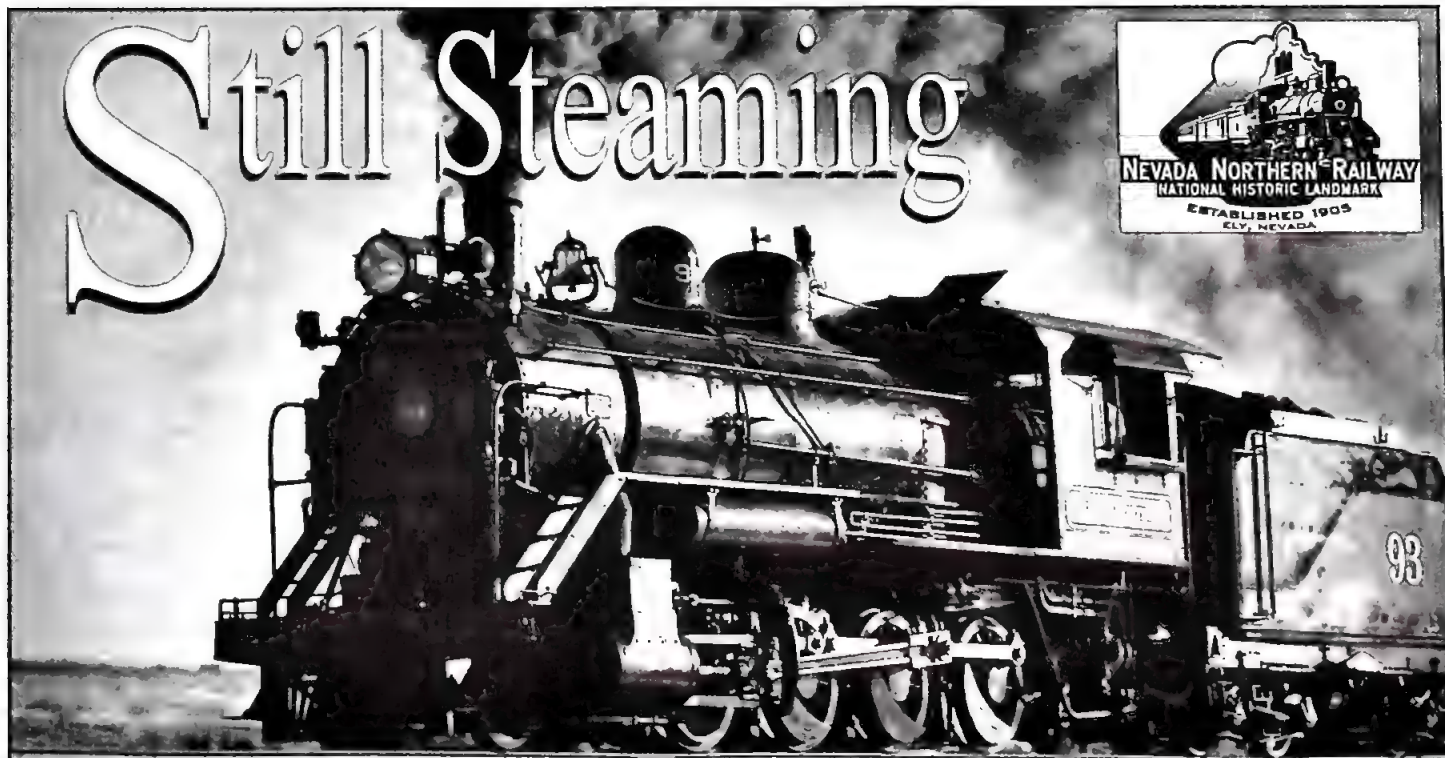
as its steam pressure and boiler-water level slowly dropped. Then the procedure would be repeated to build up steam and boiler-water level again. (Unlike coal-fired engines, oil-burners can have their fires started or extinguished quickly.)

The job was boring. A young man

might be tempted to briefly slip away from his post in search of some diversion, yet there surely was not much going on at Serra on a Saturday night. However, on the big Marine Corps Air Base at Irvine, a station about seven miles west of Serra, there was a USO dance on Saturday nights.

The young fireman at this point apparently decided—contrary to railroad rules—that he could build up steam pressure and fill the boiler with water, put out the fire, and leave the engine for a few hours. He could drive to the Marine base, spend a couple of hours at the dance, and get back to the engine in time to build up the steam pressure that had leaked down.

The exact sequence of events, and the duration of the watchman's absence, will never be known for sure. But what apparently happened is that when he returned to the locomotive, he



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Robert W. Richardson

Power to spare —for now

What appears to be a gross misuse of motive power—a 2-6-6-2 Mallet with just a baggage car and caboose for a train—isn't what it seems. The setting of this July 1941 photo is Phalanx, Ohio (near Warren), north end of New York Central's Alliance Branch down through the coal country of eastern Ohio to Dillonvale, near Wheeling, W.Va. Engine 1948, one of NYC's 74 NE-1 and NE-2 class 2-6-6-2's built by Alco between 1910 and 1921, is working train 65, the daily-except-Sunday mixed to Minerva (five windows and a vestibule at the rear of the baggage car indicate a small coach section). Photographer Richardson (who went on to be a pillar of the narrow-gauge preservation community after he moved to Colorado) noted that the train gained some 30 freight cars during its 41-mile run—honest work for a Mallet in this undulating country.

got up into the cab and noticed the steam pressure had dropped considerably. He immediately started the fire in the firebox to start rebuilding the steam pressure. Either he did not check the water level in the boiler, or he thought he could see water in the water glass gauge without checking the positive gauge cocks. Sometimes the water glasses would get stopped up with boiler sediment and register a higher-than-actual water level.

With a big fire going, the crown sheet of boiler firebox attained a very high temperature. At this time, the fireman decided to start the injector to replenish the water supply to the boiler.

The injector syphons water from the locomotive tender—which is very cold relative to the boiler interior—into the boiler to produce steam.

Most everyone knows what happens to drops of water that fall into a hot skillet on the stove; imagine this reaction magnified thousands of times. When the cold water hit the white-hot crown sheet of the boiler, there was a tremendous explosion. The boiler separated from the frame and traveled through the air like a giant projectile. It hit the roof of the Serra depot, tore off the top of the roof, and landed about 200 yards away from where the locomotive was. The track under the

engine was blown away, forming a large crater. Parts of the locomotive were strewn around in all directions. Needless to say, as is nearly always the case with boiler explosions, the young engine watchman did not survive this violent destruction.

Boiler explosions were rare in the later decades of the steam era, yet they were grimly memorable. I passed the scene of this accident the next day on train N076 to San Diego. The destruction and tremendous power of the explosion, the only one whose aftermath I ever witnessed, remains vivid in my memory today, several decades later.

—Jack O. Elwood ■

Dedicated in loving memory to my mother,

Dorothy M. Segal,

For your inspiration and encouragement.

Diane S. Segal

4-4-0

In Staunton, Virginia, about 1872

Appears a 4-4-0 locomotive with a side view

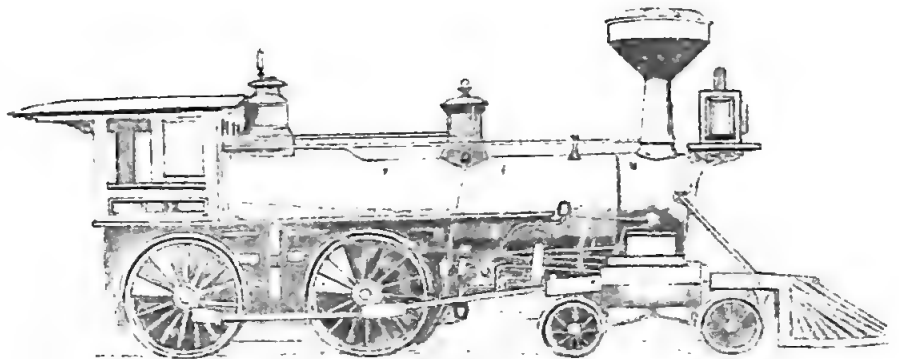
Such interesting features upon close scrutiny
Long does the eye gaze for there is much to see

From slim rods, tall candlesticks, and long
pilot the eye does roam
Then on to the ornate headlight bracket and
acorn finial dome

Last is the modern diamond spark arrester stack
All belonging to C&O locomotive number 32
there on the track

Built in 1870 by Cooke Locomotive Works was
this locomotive dream

Proving it has substance even though fancy it does seem.



Diane S. Segal

CONSOLIDATION

Of the Hocking Valley Railway this

Consolidation was a part

In 1902 by Baldwin Locomotive Works
it got its start

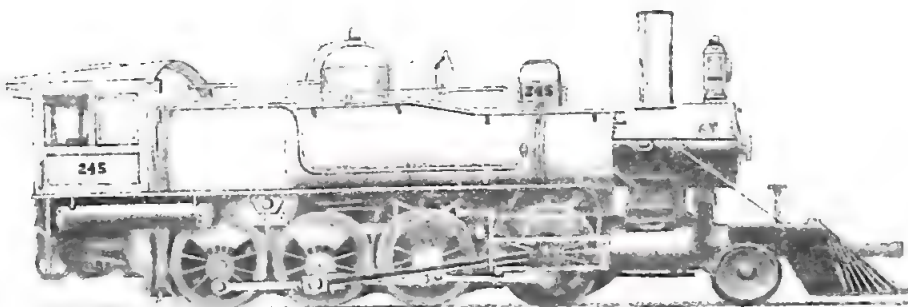
In the year 1930 the Hocking Valley Railway
did combine

Into the C&O but its locomotives retained their
own design

Locomotives before the C&O influence had
their own trait
To the Hocking Valley certain characteristics
did relate

Belpaire boilers on the locomotives were a
common sight

Side view of this Consolidation was a
real delight.



Diane S. Segal

Car Stop



Above: Ira Swett, G. Mac Seabee collection; right: John Koshwanetz, Krambles-Peterson Archive; research: Allen Copeland



San Diego streetcar days

The San Diego Street Railway, like much of California's city by the Silver Gate in the 20th century, owed its existence to sugar-magnate-turned-real-estate-developer John D. Spreckels. Formed in 1891 to acquire existing horse- and cable-powered railways and to construct electric lines, SDER was remarkable in street railway history for operating under the same name for more than half a century. Spreckels interests finally sold the property in 1948 to Western Transit Co., which changed SDER's name to San Diego Transit System; the last trolleys yielded to buses the following year. At left, not long before the end, car 401 (American Car Co., 1923) displays a Route 9 sign while running eastbound on F Street at Third Avenue, probably during a fantrip. Below, car 518, one of 28 PCC's built by St. Louis Car Co. for San Diego in 1937-38, waits at the end of Route 7 at University and Euclid avenues in East San Diego on March 20, 1949, after being turned on a nearby wye. This car and 19 sister PCC's went on to enjoy a second career with El Paso City Lines, beginning in 1950-52.



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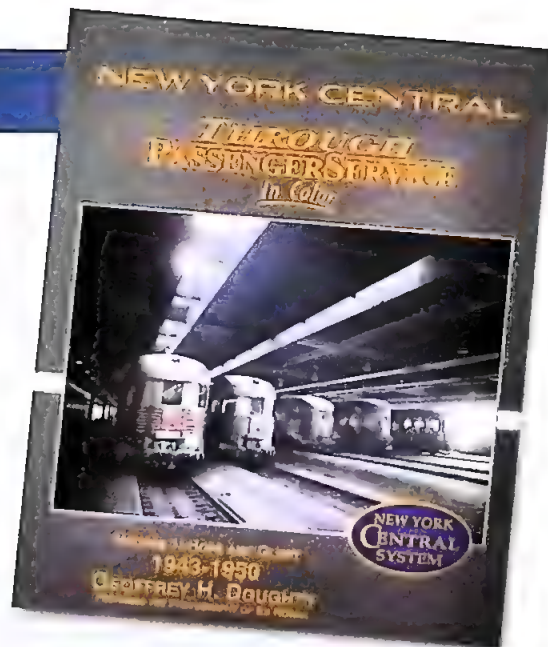
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Ready Track

First Out

This latest volume from Morning Sun
features the work of longtime New York
Central company photographer Ed Nowak,
concentrating on the "Great Steel Fleet" (as
the road called its family of long-haul pas-
senger trains) from the middle of World War
II through the 1950's. The book's more than
150 photos, all in color, include detailed
interior and exterior views of various cars
as well as photos of the trains themselves
in station scenes along with other city and
rural settings. The new *20th Century
Limited* of 1948 is highlighted, with many
other trains shown as well. Additional
illustrations include numerous reproduc-
tions of promotional materials. The text
details Nowak's photography techniques
and provides a nice summary of the Cen-
tral's passenger equipment and train opera-
tions. Photo reproduction is of its publisher's
usual high quality. You don't have to be an
NYC fan to enjoy this look into the glory
days of the streamliner era. —Jeff Wilson



*New York Central Through Passenger Service,
In Color: Vol. 1, 1943-1950*, by Geoffrey H.
Doughty. Morning Sun Books, Scotch Plains, N.J.;
www.morningsunbooks.com; (610) 683-8566; 8½
x 11 in.; hardcover; 128 pages; \$59.95.

Other Books

These two photo books present black-
and-white pictures from the extensive collection
of the late Roy Campbell, a photographer and
collector who died in 1965. Both feature mostly
roster views, although the Milwaukee book
includes a good number of action and scenic
shots. Many books about the steam era empha-
size the 1940's and '50's, but most of the
photos in these albums date from the 1920's-
'40's, with a few in the Soo book from the 19th
century. An interesting aspect of the Milwaukee
book is a 40-page chapter on the road's fleet of
2-6-6-2 Mallets. The Soo book is organized by
wheel arrangement (13 chapters, plus one on
Wisconsin Central engines), and there's a dandy
scene of Pacific 2719, currently active hauling
excursion trains out of Duluth, Minn., on a
limited in 1934. —Robert S. McGonigal

Soo Line Steam

Milwaukee Road Steam in the West

Both edited by Thomas E. Burg.

Merrill Publishing Associates, P.O. Box 51, Merrill, WI
54452; www.merrillpublishingassociates.com; 11 x 8½
in.; softcover; Soo book, 157 pages; Milwaukee book,
128 pages; \$29.95 each.



UNION PACIFIC'S STREAMLINERS



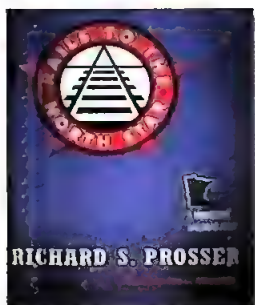
Union Pacific's fleet of *City* streamliners is the focus of Voyageur's latest Great Passenger Trains book. Author Welsh traces the early history of UP passenger service and explains the development and debut of the revolutionary M-10000 in 1934. He then examines the trains in the fleet, including the *City of Los Angeles* and *City of San Francisco* as well as *City of Denver*, *City of Portland*, *City of Salina*, and others. Welsh details the growth in streamliner service into the 1950's, through the gradual decline in the '60's, to the coming of Amtrak in 1971. The 160-plus pictures (including several period images in color) include company photos as well as those taken by many other photographers, showing passenger equipment, diesel locomotives, and the trains in various locations. Other artwork includes seating diagrams, menus, timetables, and various promotional cards and brochures. This is a nice overview of one of the country's most important passenger fleets.—J.W.

Union Pacific's Streamliners, by Joe Welsh.

Voyageur Press, MBI Publishing, Minneapolis, Minn.; www.motorbooks.com; (800) 826-6600; 8½ x 11 in.; hardcover; 160 pages; \$37.

From World War I through the late 1930's, the "billboard" refrigerator car was a colorful element in freight trains across the country. This book traces the history of such cars through more than 400 photos of examples from various leasing and ownership groups. Billboard cars were painted in the schemes and logos of packing companies, food processors, breweries, creameries, and other businesses, and the photos cover all types. The business aspect of billboard cars, with the interplay between railroads, lessors, and lessees, is thoroughly detailed, and authors Hendrickson and Kaminski—both experts on freight cars—provide an extensive explanation of why the ICC stopped the practice in 1938. The book also looks at the resurrection of a new breed of billboard reefer in the 1950's and '60's.—J.W.

Billboard Refrigerator Cars, by Richard Hendrickson and Edward S. Kaminski. Signature Press, Wilton, Calif.; www.signaturepress.com; (800) 305-7942; 8½ x 11 in.; hardcover; 222 pages; \$60.



This book should be considered mandatory for the shelf of anyone interested in Minnesota railroad history. Author Prosser (who died in 2005) first compiled *Rails to the North Star* in the 1960's, and this volume includes the original's text, which summarizes the history of each railroad in the state, from the original land grants, consolidations and mergers, through the boom in building into the early 1900's, and finally the Depression and subsequent abandonments. The current volume includes 32 pages of maps tracing the routes of railroads throughout the state as they existed at the start of each decade from 1870 through 1960. This is followed by individual maps showing each major railroad, along with logging lines and interurbans. The book also includes a foreword by noted rail-history author (and Minnesotan) Don Hofsommer.—J.W.

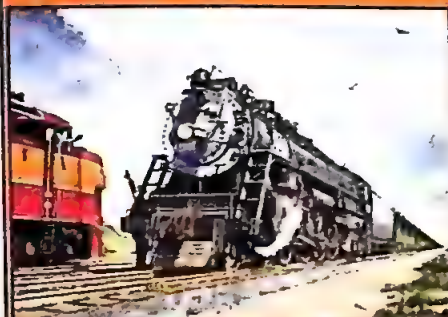
Rails to the North Star: A Minnesota Railroad Atlas, by Richard S. Prosser. University of Minnesota Press, Minneapolis, Minn.; www.upress.umn.edu; (612) 627-1970; 8½ x 11 in.; softcover; 286 pages; \$29.95.

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Where the Boys are

Eight Union Pacific 4-8-8-4's survive, in locations from Pennsylvania to California



Three photos, Robert S. McGonigal

Big Boy 4018 (top left) stands with Pennsy GG1 4903 at Dallas' Museum of the American Railroad. Cheyenne's 4004 (top right) is the only 4-8-8-4 in a traditional park setting. Most spectacular is the 4023, which, with UP Centennial diesel 6900, overlooks Interstate 80 on a Missouri River bluff.

Fifty years after the last ones ran, Union Pacific's 4-8-8-4 locomotives still have a hold on the imagination of the general public and railfans alike. This fascination with the Big Boys dates to the construction of the first ones by Alco in 1941, thanks to the engines' size; a short, memorable nickname; and UP's promotional efforts on their behalf. That 8 of the 25 Big Boys have been preserved—an extraordinary, probably unequalled survival rate for a

single class of steam locomotives—is a testament to their popularity.

Although the UP main line between Cheyenne, Wyo., and Ogden, Utah, was their “natural habitat,” today Big Boys are displayed in parks and museums nearly from coast to coast and border to border. Here are the survivors (by road number) and where to find them:

4004: Holliday Park, Cheyenne.

4005: Forney Museum of Transportation, Denver.

4006: Museum of Transportation, St. Louis.

4012: Steamtown National Historic Site, Scranton, Pa.

4014: Fairplex, Pomona, Calif.

4017: National Railroad Museum, Green Bay, Wis.

4018: Museum of the American Railroad (formerly Age of Steam Museum), Dallas, Texas

4023: Kenefick Park, Lauritzen Gardens, Omaha, Nebr.

Although the mystique surrounding the “4000's” (as UP men called them) shows few signs of dimming, and those preserved are well cared for, the likelihood of any being restored to operation is low—they're just too big. For more on the enduring appeal of Big Boys, including stories of the eight survivors, see *The Big Legacy of the Union Pacific Big Boy*, by James J. Reisdorff and Mi-

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chael M. Bartels, published in 2006 by South Platte Press.—*Rob McGonigal*

For the Muskogee Roads, a 'virtual historical society'

When Hal Miller, former *TRAINS* managing editor and now editor of Kalmbach's trade magazine *MODEL RETAILER*, wrote his "Fallen Flags Remembered" entry on the Muskogee Group railroads [Spring 2008, pages 16-19], we on the *CLASSIC TRAINS* staff, and Hal, kidded about his being "president" of a "Muskogee Roads Historical & Technical Society." Hal printed up 8x11-inch sheets with the three-railroads emblem [right] and gave all interested a copy, which includes the line "Membership No. 1." A few non-Kalmbachers known to be interested in the roads were included.

In the real world, the Muskogee Roads would have a small following, be-

ing obscure lines with scant passenger service, and gone as individual roads for decades. They rarely get ink, the photos on page 84 notwithstanding.

Meanwhile, friend Mike Condren of Memphis, who grew up in Fort Smith, Ark., east end of the Midland Valley, has become quite the creator of Web sites on various railroad topics. He is foremost "a Frisco man" [having written its "Fallen Flags Remembered" entry in our Spring 2001 issue], and his Frisco Web site is extensive (www.cbu.edu/~mcondren/frisco.html). But when he sent an update to his Muskogee Group site, it occurred to us that what Mike really has done with that is create a "virtual railroad historical society."

It would be quite an effort to gather all the fans of the Muskogee Group roads from across the U.S. under one

(small) roof for a meeting (let alone bother to elect officers, collect dues, etc.), and probably not enough material exists to sustain even a quarterly magazine on these roads. But if you are interested in the trio, go to his site: www.cbu.edu/~mcondren/FSVB/Midland-Valley.htm. (Mike also maintains sites on Memphis and Fort Smith-Van Buren railroad history.)

Most of the real railroad historical societies ("SIG's," i.e., special interest groups) maintain Web sites, and the Missouri Pacific's has a small section on the KO&G (www.mopac.org/history_muskogeeLines.asp). There are also sites for long-gone short lines (Illinois' Galesburg & Great Eastern comes to mind), but Mike's might be considered the first one solely about a former Class 1 without a corresponding real group.—*Dave Ingles* ■



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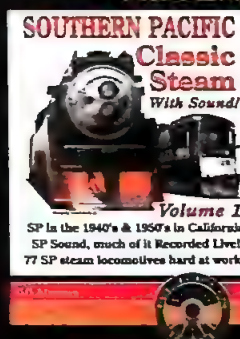
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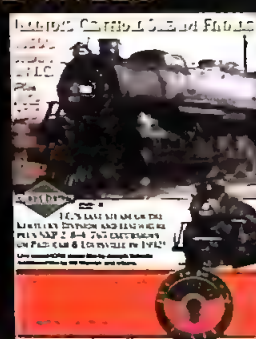
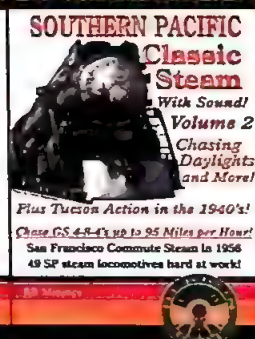
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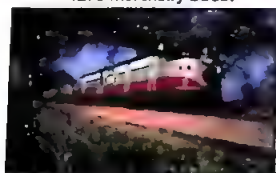
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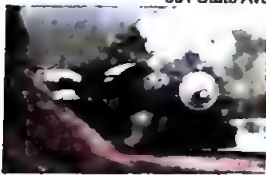
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R. S. Plummer

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A bright July 23, 1954, morning finds Missouri Pacific No. 121, the St. Louis-to-Houston and Galveston section of the *Texas Eagle*, at Houston Union Station. Designed by the noted depot architectural firm Warren and Wetmore for owner/operator Houston Belt & Terminal, Union opened in 1911. In addition to MoPac, the station served the Burlington-Rock Island and Santa Fe (Katy and Southern Pacific, the other big roads in town, each had its own station). The last train departed Union Station on July 31, 1974, when Amtrak moved the *Lone Star* to the SP facility. After that, Union's five-story, brick-

and-terra-cotta head building continued to house HB&T offices, but by the late 1990's it faced an uncertain future. In one of the more unusual passenger-terminal adaptive reuse efforts, the structure was incorporated into the new Houston Astros baseball park, which opened in 2000 (initially called the Ballpark at Union Station, it opened in 2000 as Enron Field; now it's Minute Maid Park). In honor of its heritage, the park has a replica of a 19th-century 4-4-0 that rolls along a track when the Astros hit a home run or win a game. The two PA's on the *Eagle* would be standing in right field today. ■

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